The Hungarian World 1938–1940

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FOREWORD

The temporary exhibition entitled "The Hungarian World 1938–1940" was hosted by the Hungarian National Museum between December 2019 and March 2020. The organisers defined the goal of the exhibition as follows: "to present the political and social life and art scene of Hungary at the end of the 1930s with interactive tools and via 20 thematic sections and a café in the way how the people of the age saw and experienced it; in other words, to create a snapshot".

We are delighted to state that the exhibition escaped the fate of temporary exhibits, cessation, as on the one hand, it was transferred to the Dezső Laczkó Museum in Veszprém and numerous recordings, a "Virtual Tour" and a related online quiz are also available on the Internet. On the other hand, the present volume of studies – that will soon be available also in English – contains the edited presentations delivered at a related conference held with the involvement of several researchers of the Institute for Hungarian Studies.

István Széchenyi's book "Világ vagy is felvilágosító töredékek némi hiba 's előitélet eligazitására" (in English: Light or Illuminating Fragments to Correct Some Errors and Prejudices) was published by the Landerer Printing House in Pest in 1831. Széchenyi's book can be read as a significant parallel to our age as the Horthy era is still at the heart of serious historical and public debates and there are numerous errors, mistakes, misunderstandings and prejudices around the topic. It is not the intention of either the exhibition or the volume to contradict them, they rather follow a consistent approach by providing an unbiased perspective with a focus on hitherto undeservedly ignored details of lifestyle history instead of dealing with overemphasized political topics and event history. The book presents lifestyle historical topics within a short time period with a diversified approach and from a multidisciplinary and micro-historical point of view.

The present volume of nearly 300 pages contains eleven studies; more than half of the authors are researchers of the Institute for Hungarian Studies. Although the studies are arranged in alphabetical order according to the authors' names, the topics align a thematic-methodological structure.

The first three studies present a traditional topic of political history. Zoltán Babucs places his study in the broader context of the topic: "Regarding the entry of the Royal Hungarian Army into the territory of Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland between 5 and 13 September 1940, the generally self-flagellant Hungarian historiography (in unison with the Romanians) tries to highlight the controversies and – concerning the incidents that took place in Szilágyipp (today: Ip, Romania) and Ördögkút (today: Treznea, Romania) – attempts to draw the conclusion that this period was characterised by a series of atrocities committed by the Hungarian army." Based on the sources, Zoltán Babucs concludes: "When Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland were returned to Hungary, 550 000 fully armed and equipped soldiers were involved. It is a miracle that weapons were used only a few times. Even though the Hungarian authorities tried to deal humanely with the Romanian population – while the Hungarians in Southern Transylvania were constantly being harassed by the Romanians – in 1944 the Romanian army did not forego the opportunity to take revenge for "the Hungarian retaliation of 1940".

József Botlik's study is a more comprehensive overview of the changes in the whole historic region, which is also indicated by the title, Territorial changes of Carpathian Ruthenia: 1919–1945; analysing the region and the hardship. Examining the region and the difficulties faced by the inhabitants, the author concludes: "In the meantime, separated Hungarians living in Ukraine still avoid the politically-charged Transcarpathia expression and self-consciously use the Subcarpathia expression. The geographical extent of their homeland has not yet changed."

László Gulyás' study titled "The First Vienna Award, the endgame: what happened on 2 November 1938" is also related to the topic of territorial revisions. The subject is also integrated into the context of present-day historiographic assessment: "Nowadays, Hungarian historiography assesses the Vienna Award in two ways: one of the trends considers it as historical justice, while the other

school tries to relativise it in the spirit of some sort of pseudo-objectivity." Finally, the author of this study believes that the First Vienna Award was the exact and objective implementation of the demarcation of the border on an ethnographic basis. "Furthermore, it can be stated that the Slovak-Hungarian frontier of the First Vienna Award was much fairer in every respect – but particularly in terms of the application of the ethnographic principle – than the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border demarcated by Trianon. The First Vienna Award drew a fair border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia."

Although the topics of the next eight studies vary; all of them are of lifestyle, mentality and reception historical interest. Péter Illik writes about the evaluation of the Horthy era in Hungarian secondary school history textbooks and presents the consistent interpretation of the past in the spirit of socialist ideology. He concludes that coursebooks published after 1989 do not necessarily evaluate the Horthy era positively, but they created the illusion of objectivity by omitting the socialist phraseology from the structure and phraseology of the text.

Csaba Kása's study guides the readers to the area of cinematography. Films are analysed in the following cultural-political context: "Because in Hungary – where at the time two worlds were living side by side – it was only natural that both sides used the opportunities inherent in cinematographic art to spread their own ideas, cultures and life experiences. [...] film production in the 1920s and 1930s was a profit-generating business, as well as propaganda for the lifestyle of one of the two worlds and a mirror of their desires. The other world – the Hungarian world – could not just idly stand by and watch, but they did not have many tools at their disposal, precisely because in the era of free entrepreneurship the film industry also operated perfectly well as a lucrative line of business."

Artúr Köő's study titled "Are living witnesses from the revision period still telling their stories, and if so, about what?" conducts the reader to the area of oral history and presents details from his interviews.

Szabolcs Zsombor Pál examines the impacts of Portuguese Salazarism on Hungary between the two World Wars and concludes that there was strong interest in developments taking place in Portugal and in the Salazar regime until 1945. He recites the statement purportedly made by Miklós Horthy: "If

all dictatorships were like this one, it would be the best form of government known today".

Ferenc Szávai analyses the Hungarian economic processes in the post-Trianon Hungary until 1944. Using numerous statistical data, the author concludes that "... after stabilisation the Hungarian economy developed relatively quickly. In the Horthy era, the economy also performed well in an international comparison and responded adequately to the challenges."

Examining the still relevant topic of secret societies, Nóra Szekér deals with the question of where the anti-fascist forces of the Horthy era disappeared: "any form of resistance that could be related in any way to »Horthist elements« was to be interpreted as state-authorised activity, and consequently a manifestation of »Horthy's fascism«. In a country where one of the focal points of organisation against Hitler's politics operated within the circles of the political elite, finding a connection between this elite and any group of resistance was only a matter of intent. This interpretation of resistance had been outlined from 1945, was stated in 1947, and remained valid for the entire period of the regime, based on the argument in the report that states, »As a result of the exploration of socialist historical science, it can be shown that the dominant circles of the Horthy system used 'resistance' as a pretence to perform activities meant to preserve their power.«"

In her short summary, entitled Lasting works of the St. Stephen Memorial Year, Éva Teiszler analyses the St. Stephen Memorial Year from the point of view of memory politics with a focus on stamps, coins and other works of visual art.

In the final study of the volume, Tamás László Vizi presents radical right-wing movements and government efforts aimed at their suppression in the 1930s. His final conclusion is that "during the years between the 1935 and 1939 elections, the support for far-right parties and movements increased enormously. Their rise is indisputable. As well as the fact that the governing parties used all constitutional and administrative means in order to hinder this rise. Although this was successful in the 1939 Pentecost elections, ...storm clouds were gathering in the spring of 1939."

The studies discuss inflammatory, so far neglected or still relevant topics with great skill. The authors – strictly applying the methodology of historiography

and based on sources and extensive literature – form their opinion and do not hide behind the disguise of objectivity and value neutrality, as a result of which the volume provides a detailed and nuanced picture of the Horthy era that is scientifically sound in every sense, both regarding the topics and the value judgement.

Budapest, the month of November 2021

The editors

ZOLTÁN BABUCS

SECURITY OPERATIONS OF THE 2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE OF BUDAPEST IN SZILÁGYSÁG BETWEEN 11 AND 18 SEPTEMBER 1940

Regarding the entry of the Royal Hungarian Army into the territory of Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland between 5 and 13 September 1940,[1] the generally self-flagellant Hungarian historiography (in unison with the Romanians) tries to highlight the controversies[2] and – concerning the incidents that took place in Szilágyipp (today: Ip, Romania) and Ördögkút (today: Treznea, Romania) – attempts to draw the conclusion that this period was characterised by a series of atrocities committed by the Hungarian army. On the 70th anniversary of the Second Vienna Award, Ignác Romsics wrote the following in the daily newspaper Népszabadság: "Transfer of the territories took place in a dangerously tense atmosphere. This tension and the irresponsible behaviour of a few military leaders led to a number of atrocities in the early days of September." The article also points out that the Romanian army and population extinguished the lives of "only" a few dozen Hungarians, while the Hungarian army killed more

1 Sárándi 2016, p. 38.
2 Ablonczy 2017, pp. 58–65.

than two hundred Romanians.[3] Although this generalisation provoked the indignation of former Second World War Hungarian royal military officers still alive at that time, no written documents have been preserved that demonstrate their reaction. There is little chance that a joint Hungarian-Romanian historical committee will ever process these aspects of the events of 1940. While the Romanian side[4] has always made claims with exaggerated figures, Péter Illésfalvi examined the history of these incidents from the Hungarian point of view.[5]

Military administration was temporarily established in Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland when the two were regions returned to the jurisdiction of the Hungarian Holy Crown following the Second Vienna Award.

> "According to the Hungarian terminology of the period, military administration was generally established where the functioning of the civil administration in the country was threatened by hostile influence, or for the temporary administration of occupied foreign territories that had been seized by the armed forces. In its area of competence, the military administrative service must ensure the performance of all necessary administrative work, the regulation of the living conditions and behaviour of the population, the maintenance of public order and security, as well as the continuity of economic life. [...] The military administration instituted in the territories reoccupied between 1938 and 1941 – on a temporary basis in all of the areas – was directed by the Hungarian High Command, based on the guidelines of the Supreme Defence Council and taking into consideration the provisions of Act 1913:XLIII on the laws of war, as set forth in the Hague Convention."[6]

At the time of entry, the Romanian side responded with several attacks that grossly violated the laws of war; the security forces of the Hungarian army retaliated against these mercilessly, in the interests of maintaining order and public safety. The incident that took place at Szilágyipp is an example of

3 Romsics 2010, p. 4.
4 Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 69–72.
5 Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 58–77; Illésfalvi 2005, pp. 33–38.
6 Sebestyén & Szabó 2008, p. 1385.

these events. Due to past conflicts, the atmosphere was indeed tense, and both sides had been initiating smaller or larger armed raids along the Hungarian-Romanian border since the end of 1938.[7]

Following the Second Vienna Award, the Romanian army was the first to use weapons. On 2 September 1940, Hungarians protecting their property from ransacking Romanian soldiers or protesting against the violence of Romanians were shot in Bihardiószeg (today: Diosig, Romania) and between Szatmárnémeti (today: Satu Mare, Romania) and Szamosdara (today: Dara, Romania). Nine people were killed and many were injured. According to Hungarian sources, it was in this period that Romanian soldiers, along with armed Romanian civilians, rampaged and looted in Máramarossziget (today: Sighetu Marmației, Romania). On 4 September there was a firefight between Hungarian soldiers and Romanian border guards in Bihardiószeg. A Hungarian national guard shot by Romanians was buried in the village, and Hungarian army soldiers were allegedly also present at the ceremony. Shortly after the burial, shooting broke out, in which the Hungarian soldiers shot dead a Romanian sergeant, a corporal, a lance corporal and a private, and seriously injured a first lieutenant. First Lieutenant Dumitru Lazăr died at the Debrecen garrison hospital; a hundred thousand Romanian lei were found sewn into his jacket, which he had collected in robberies committed by his subordinates against Hungarians. Moreover, the victims were coerced to withdraw their reports. On 5 September 1940, the withdrawing Romanian army shot dead two Hungarian national guardsmen; they were buried a few days later, after the entry, with Hungarian military honours.[8]

During the "kissing campaign", the Hungarian army was greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm by the Hungarian population, while the Saxons kept a cool distance and the Romanians showed restraint and sometimes hostility. The Hungarian army and law enforcement bodies (police, gendarmerie) did not enter the returned territories with malicious intent, as proven by the governor's military order: "We bring liberation to our Transylvanian brothers

7 Illésfalvi 2004, p. 60.

8 Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 62–63; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, pp. 21–22; Árvay 2011, pp. 43–56.

and sisters who have been enslaved for 22 years, and love to the nationalities within our borders who are loyal to us."[9] According to the provisions entitled "Guidelines on the Conduct of the Occupying Troops" issued by the Chief of the General Staff of the Hungarian Army, "The population of Hungarian and German nationality must be treated with the utmost charity and courtesy. In our treatment of the Romanian and other nationalities, we must always act with the dignity, fairness and humanity worthy of the Hungarian soldier."[10] A series of similar measures were also taken, such as the one issued on 14 September 1940, based upon the orders of the Commander of the "József Nádor" 2nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest: "The stance of the Hungarian army towards the other nationalities must be characterised by confidence, supremacy and a strong hand, and must not lead to the unjustified use of force."[11]

Hungarian military intelligence warned of the possibility of attacks and drew attention to the need to demine and thoroughly inspect settlements, wells and facilities. According to the instructions, in each of the returned settlements of more than a thousand inhabitants, contact persons of Hungarian nationality were to be recruited: these people had to have a thorough knowledge of the location as well as report on strangers in their village and people hostile to Hungarians. In order to protect the Hungarian population, it was also permitted to take hostages, especially people of Romanian nationality who were hostile towards Hungarians. There are voices that, in retrospect, classify all these legitimate precautions as "spy and guerrilla hysteria".[12]

During the entry of the Hungarian army into Transylvania, the region of Szilágyság (today: Sălaj, Romania) was one of the most hostile regions: most of the settlements in the Meszes (today: Meseş, Romania) Mountains were villages of mixed or entirely Romanian population. Furthermore, one village in the area called Badacson (today: Bădăcin, Romania), where Iuliu Maniu was born, was a stronghold of the nationalist guard named after him.[13] On 7 September 1940,

9 Babucs 2017, p. 13.
10 Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, p. 17.
11 Babucs & Szabó 2013, p. 46.
12 Ablonczy 2017, pp. 58–59.
13 Babucs & Szabó 2013, pp. 42–43.

around noon, the 1st Battalion of the "Bocskai István" 11th Hajdú Regiment of Debrecen took a long break near Szilágyipp, a village situated between Margitta (today: Marghita, Romania) and Szilágysomlyó (today: Şimleu Silvaniei, Romania). After resuming their march, one of the ammunition cars of the 11th Battalion of the 1st Machine Gun Squadron exploded and two soldiers were killed as a result. Among other things, the vehicle was carrying hand grenades that had been found in the Romanian barracks in Margitta; contrary to the regulations, these had not been destroyed. An impromptu on-site inspection found that one of the grenades had activated due to the shaking, causing the explosion.[14] From this incident arose the so-called "apple basket story", which cannot be confirmed with reliable sources.[15]

In the days before the transfer of the territories, members of the Iron Guard had already incited the Romanian population of the area against the Hungarians. Mrs Imre Máté was shot dead and József Kisfalussy was bludgeoned to death as a result of incitement by Urpea, the Greek Catholic priest of Szilágyipp.[16]

Even the Hungarian Telegraph Office reported on the 9 September 1940 incident at Ördögkút:[17] "The Maniu guards hiding in the village fired shots at the Border Guard Battalion passing through Ördögkút, which resulted in four border guards being seriously injured. Hungarian troops surrounded the village. The Romanian peasants themselves led the border guards to the hiding place of the attackers, and after a short fight these were rendered harmless by the border guards. 16 members of the Maniu Guard lost their lives in the fight. Upon examining the dead, the border guards were surprised to find that four of them had manicured hands, in sharp contrast with the peasant clothes they were wearing."[18] Based on an eyewitness account, Colonel of the General

14 Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, p. 22.

15 Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 63–64; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, p. 23.

16 Illésfalvi 2004, p. 64; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, p. 22.

17 For more details on the incident at Ördögkút, see Illésfalvi 2004, p. 64, pp. 67–68; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, pp. 23–24; Illésfalvi & Szabó 2015, p. 130.

18 National Archives of Hungary (MNL), news by the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) 1920–1956, Daily Reports 1920–1944, 12 September 1940. http://www.library.hungaricana.hu/; (downloaded on 6 May 2020)

Staff Gyula Kádár of Nyárád-Gálfalva[19] (in 1940 Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff and Chief of the General Staff of the 4th Corps Command of Pécs) recounted the events decades later, tailored to the expectations of the regime in power at that time:

> "The column of the 6th Corps marched toward Zsibó (today: Jubou, Romania). The advance guard of the column was the 22nd Border Guard Battalion, while the main body of troops marched two kilometres behind them. Colonel Károly Ákosy was the commander of the Border Guard Battalion.[20] [...] In the evening before the march to Ördögkút, a troop cart carrying poorly stored hand grenades exploded due to the shaking. This incident immediately gave rise to a rumour according to which the cart was blown up by lurking Iron Guards. The soldiers were already anxious in the evening. A rumour spread in the battalion that they would be attacked in the Meszes Mountains. The next day, when the battalion's advance guard arrived in Ördögkút, no one was out in the streets: the Romanian inhabitants of the village hid in their houses in fright, there was no reception of any kind, and white flags were displayed on every house. In all likelihood, the Romanian priest or some other official of the village still wanted to give some kind of reception. In a village, the tool for a reception is the church bell. As the men of the advance guard appeared, the bells started ringing. The overly circumspect battalion commander feared that this was a signal meant for the hidden Iron Guards. He assigned a non-commissioned officer to go to the church and demand the bell ringing cease immediately. The non-commissioned officer stood under the tower, shouting as loud as he could for the bell ringer to stop. The bell ringer, who may not even have heard the shouting (and he probably did not know Hungarian either), kept pulling the bell ropes. The non-

19 Szakály 2003, pp. 160–161; Szakály 2015, pp. 75–76.

20 Károly Ákosy (Miskolc, 1 July 1893 – Kiev, 24 October 1942) was still a lieutenant colonel at this time; he became an infantry colonel on 1 November 1941. Lukács & Szabó 2015, p. 383; Maruzs 2013, p. 18.

commissioned officer reacted by firing into the tower several times. As soon as the members of the advance guard heard the shots, they began shouting, "The Romanians have fired!" The machine guns opened fire on the tower, and as usual in panic situations, random shooting ensued. The frightened villagers hiding in their small houses started running towards the nearby forest, apparently in the belief that the Hungarians intended to exterminate the entire village. The enraged soldiers began shooting at the running people, who fell one after the other. The officers were not assertive enough, and they could not – or perhaps did not want to – stop the shooting. The panic was worsened by the fact that the village was L-shaped, and the shots from the lower leg of the letter L were fired towards the upper leg, where most of the battalion was positioned. At this point, they started shooting as well. Ákosy gave command to the mortar battalion to fire on the village, and also ordered the artillery battery assigned to the battalion to take up firing position. The village was burning, the small wooden houses were incinerated one after the other, many people burning in them. [...] Ördögkút was almost completely destroyed. The pandemonium was put to an end by the arrival and forceful action of Szilárd Bakay,[21] a colonel at that time. After the incident, a series of major investigations took place not only by the Hungarian side, but also by a joint German-Italian-Romanian committee. In such investigations, usually everyone involved lies without scruples. This case was no different either. During the retreat, the troops at one of the small Romanian forts had been unable to take along some of their weapons and a few crates of ammunition. These had been hidden somewhere near Ördögkút. Later, they were found by the Hungarian troops and used as evidence before the committee to prove that all they did was avert a prepared and imminent attack. It does not take much imagination to speculate

21 vitéz Szilárd Bakay (Budapest, 8 September 1892 – Sopron, 17 March 1947), colonel, lieutenant general from 1 October 1942. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as commander of the 17th Infantry Brigade of Budapest. Szakály 2003, pp. 33–34.

> on the testimony given by the handful of frightened, illiterate, simple Romanians before the committee, in contrast to the routine answers of the other party. Therefore, no one ended up in trouble – and we can be thankful that Colonel Ákosy did not receive some prestigious military medal."[22]

After the 17th Infantry Brigade of Debrecen and the 7th Infantry Brigade of Sopron, the 2nd Infantry Brigade of Budapest,[23] commanded by Infantry Colonel Géza Heim,[24] Baron of San Martino del Carso, also marched into Szilágyság and permanently occupied the villages around Szilágyipp. Sporadic shots were fired at the corps of the Budapest brigade both during the march and quartering, although the soldiers did not provoke these attacks in any way. On 10 September 1940, the 2nd Corps Command of Székesfehérvár received a report, according to which armed Romanians were hiding in the areas of the villages of Alsókaznacs, Felsőkaznacs, Márkaszék, Porc, Lecsmér, Somály and Kémer (today: Cosniciul de jos, Cosniciul de sus, Marca, Porţ, Leşmir, Şumal, Camăr, all in Romania). The commander of the 2nd Corps staff estimated the number of the armed individuals hiding in the forests at around 80–100 people, so he ordered the 2nd Infantry Brigade to search the area and eliminate any armed resistance.[25]

22 Kádár 1978, I. pp. 354–356.

23 The 2nd Infantry Brigade included the "József Nádor" 2nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest (comprising the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest and the 3rd Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment of Jászberény), the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest, a twin corps set up during the mobilisation (comprising the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest, and the 3rd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Jászberény), as well as other corps of the capital, such as the 2nd Hussar Squadron, the 2nd Artillery Regiment, the 2nd Air Defence Machine Gun Platoon, the 2nd Communications Squadron, the 2nd Train Command, the 2nd Provisioning Column, the 2nd Ambulance Column and the 2nd Ambulance Vehicle Convoy.

24 vitéz Géza Heim, Baron of San Martino del Carso (Nagyszentmiklós, 20 April 1888 – Budapest, 3 March 1942), colonel, major general from 1 November 1940, Knight of the Maria Theresa Military Order. During the period of entry into Transylvania, he served as commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade of Budapest. Szakály 2003, p. 131.

25 Regarding the events that occurred in Szilágyság, see Babucs 2001, p. 38; Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 65–67, pp. 69–72; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, pp. 22–23; Babucs & Szabó 2013, pp. 42–45.

The region of Szilágyság was inhabited mainly by Romanians, and the area was considered the cradle of the Maniu Guard; therefore, according to a later report, Colonel Heim transmitted the following order of his superiors to the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest, charged with searching the area: "[...] in order to set an example, effect immediate, forceful and ruthless retaliation against any armed or otherwise dangerous attacks by Romanians on troops and individual members of the military, or any attempts at such attacks."[26]

It should be noted that during the preparations for the military occupation of the returned territories, the Romanian-Hungarian joint military committee, which met in Nagyvárad (today: Oradea, Romania) on 1 and 2 September 1940, agreed on several issues supporting the peaceful entry of the army. One of the points of the agreement set forth that armed civilians using weapons to resist the entering Hungarian army were to be treated in accordance with international agreements and were to be regarded as *francs-tireurs*[27] by the Hungarian military authorities. The negotiators on the Romanian side promised that the evacuation authorities would do their utmost to collect weapons held by the civilian population, and similarly, to take action against behaviour threatening the local population, attacks on persons and property, as well as arson and destruction.[28] However, the collection of weapons took place haphazardly, only in part or not at all, which had serious consequences when Romanian snipers, mostly hot-headed, shot at the Hungarian army.[29]

Once the Hungarian Army occupied the returned region, military administration was established and then replaced by civilian administration on 26 November 1940.[30] During the initial period, it may have proved necessary to apply martial law. The martial law responsibilities of the Royal Hungarian Army

26 Military History Archives, 1st Corps Command, Box No. 489. 1940. Statement of weapon use on the territory of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Command. 44993/pres. – 1940.

27 "Free shooters", i.e. partisans.

28 National Archives of Hungary (MNL), news by the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) 1920–1956, Daily Reports 1920–1944, 1 and 2 September 1940. http://www.library.hungaricana.hu/; (downloaded on 6 May 2020); Babucs & Szabó 2013, p. 38; Illésfalvi & Szabó 2015, pp. 32–33.

29 Illésfalvi 2004, pp. 60–61.

30 Sebestyén & Szabó 2008, p. 1417.

were set forth in detail by the Regulations (A–15) of 1923 and 1924.[31] In his study, Lieutenant Colonel Dr István Ravasz, a military historian, states the following:

> However, in the event that the situation deteriorated to such an extent that the Hungarian Army had to intervene, strict rules came into force. The goal was to ensure that the action of the soldiers could be effective in deciding over, settling and permanently terminating every such situation *ad absurdum*. The method to be followed was precisely described: "Forcefulness, which may be increased to the point of ruthlessness if necessary, always accomplishes the goal […]", because "[…] hesitation and fear of responsibility are the sources of failure." In the course of a forceful action, "[…] it is not acceptable under any circumstances to make any agreement or enter into any compromise." In order for all commanders to understand forcefulness in the same way as the creators of the regulations, it was stressed: "[…] never fire with blank ammunition or into the air." The requirement of forcefulness, and even ruthlessness, can be explained by a principle that was also described in the regulations: actions by the security forces "[…] should safeguard the honour of the armed forces in all circumstances […]".[32]

On 11 September 1940, the 1st Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest was marching from Szilágyszeg (today: Sălăţig, Romania) to the village of Szilágygörcsön (today: Gârceiu, Romania) when the battalion commander was notified that the population of Debren (today: Dobrin, Romania), a village situated on their route, was preparing for armed resistance against the Hungarian army. Lieutenant Colonel Erik Bresztovszky[33] decided to send

31 According to the 1924 martial law regulations, "the purpose of applying martial law is to support civilian authorities in the performance of their legitimate duties, and especially in their work aiming to maintain or restore state and social order and public security in cases where the law enforcement bodies under civilian authorities are not sufficient for this purpose." Ravasz 2019, p. 374.

32 Ravasz 2008, p. 298; Ravasz 2019, pp. 376–377.

33 Erik Bresztovszky (Gyulafehérvár [today: Alba Iulia, Romania], 24 June 1895 – n. a.), major, colonel from 1 May 1943. At the time of reoccupying the territories of Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland, he served as commander of the 1st Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. Military History Archives, Registry Sheets No. 300/1896.

ahead to Debren a scout patrol composed of a platoon under the command of re-enlisted Warrant Officer László Jeney,[34] one of the non-commissioned officers of the 1st Rifle Squadron of the 32nd Infantry Brigade. The patrol wanted to consult with the mayor of the village before conducting the necessary house searches. After it became obvious that the hostile-minded population was not going to offer any assistance, Alexa Tyjerán was singled out from the crowd to help with identifying the mayor. However, Tyjerán started to verbally abuse the soldiers and then attacked reserve soldier János Tóth, who shot his attacker to death in self-defence.

On 13 September 1940, at 5 p.m., the Brigade Command received a report according to which a telephone patrol of the 32nd Infantry Regiment laying a line between Szilágysomlyó and Szilágynagyfalu (today: Nuşfalău, Romania) had been attacked from the forest situated near the railway and the road intersection north of Szilágynagyfalu. Led by Major János Ranga,[35] a military police squadron consisting of soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest, led by First Lieutenant Zsolt Bedő[36] was already on its way to Szilágyipp to conduct house searches in the village. First Lieutenant Bedő had already been instructed in Szilágynagyfalu that the destination of the squadron was the village where, several days earlier, someone had handed a time bomb hidden in an apple basket to the Hungarian troops entering the

34 László Jeney of Nagyenyed, nobleman (Kolozsvár [today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania], 11 July 1915 – n. a.), re-enlisted warrant officer, first lieutenant from 1 August 1943. A participant in the mobilisation and entry into Transylvania as one of the section commanders of the 1st Rifle Squadron Unit of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. Military History Archives, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1939. B. Matters regarding personnel; Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, László Jeney, Officers' Documents Collector no. 34136.

35 János Ranga (10 May 1900 – n. a.), major, lieutenant colonel from 30 September 1942. At the time of the Transylvanian mobilisation and entry, he served as commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. No other personal data or information on his military service are available.

36 Zsolt Bedő (Budapest, 5 December 1911 – n. a.), first lieutenant, captain from 31 March 1942. At the time of the Transylvanian mobilisation and entry, he served as commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Machine Gun Squadron. Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, Zsolt Bedő, Officers' Documents Collector No. 3801 (hereinafter: ODC).

village; later, the bomb exploded and killed three soldiers.[37] Therefore, the Hungarian soldiers were quite incensed at their arrival in the village. The unfortunate incident in Szilágyipp was later reported as follows:

> "[…] during the house searches carried out after dark by the military police squadron in the village of Ipp, 18 members of the Iron Guard, none of them inhabitants of the village, were found hidden in attics and barns. When questioned, they resisted on the one hand, and made an attempt to escape on the other hand; as a result, the squadron used weapons and shot 16 people on the spot, while two managed to escape. On 14 September, at 3:04 a.m., the military police squadron, resting at the school in Ipp, was ambushed by machine gun, rifle and submachine gun fire from the street opposite the school. In the darkness, the guards and the aroused military police squadron returned fire with machine guns, which resulted in 152 deaths among the attackers, some of whom died during the subsequent pursuit."[38]

Eight decades later, it is difficult to reconstruct exactly what happened. It may be assumed that the officers and soldiers of the military police squadron, already under considerable nervous tension and affected by the hostile environment, may have panicked when the shot or shots were fired during the night. It is unlikely that an armed Romanian group attacked the soldiers quartered in the school, as the squadron suffered no casualties. One shot may have been fired at the soldiers quartered in the school from the tower of the Reformed (sic!) Church, but the identity of the perpetrator is also uncertain. A man named Viktor Chifor, hiding at a nearby farm, confessed before his death to having fired the shot, but it cannot be proven that he was indeed the perpetrator. The manhunt for the Romanian population, organised with the active participation of the local Hungarians,[39] may have started after they failed

37 Military History Archives, 1st Corps Command, Box No. 489. 1940. Statement of weapon use on the territory of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Command. 44993/pres. – 1940.

38 Military History Archives, 1st Corps Command, Box No. 489. 1940. Statement of weapon use on the territory of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Command. 44993/pres. – 1940.

39 Most of the Hungarians from Szilágyipp who were involved in the events were sentenced to 20 to 25 years in prison by the Romanian authorities. Illésfalvi 2004, p. 76.

to find the sniper who had fired the shot or shots. Executions started at 11 p.m., as a result of which 157 Romanian men, women and children were killed. The bodies were buried in a mass grave in the local Romanian cemetery the next day. The military police squadron then left Szilágyipp, carrying spoils of war (one light machine gun, sixteen rifles, two pistols). On 24 October 1940, the German-Italian special committee arrived on the scene and merely conducted an inspection, but did not find any substantive information.[40]

Lance Corporal Antal Kovács[41] was a participant in the events as a soldier in the 7th Rifle Squadron of the 32nd Infantry Regiment of Jászberény. In the mid-1990s he recounted the events as follows:

> "One of our platoons was billeted in the school. There was a church approximately 30 metres from the school. During the night, the guard was walking around the school when he was shot at from the tower. No one was hurt. [...] But the alarm was sounded for sure! After sunrise, everyone received orders. I, too, was ordered to stand on guard at one end of a street, and make sure that not a single soul could get into or out of the village. Everyone in the village had to be rounded up in the school. The mayor and other people were questioned about who were members of the Iron Guard in the village. Nobody admitted to knowing one. One of the cadet sergeants demanded the list be submitted immediately. [...] At this time, I was already on guard in the yard. Not a single confession was made in the interrogation room, so those people were beaten badly by the cadet sergeant from Árokszállás. Suddenly he calls out to me through the window, "Kovács! Heat up some iron in the fire! That will make them confess! [...]" But the iron was not needed after all, because the village ended up being burned down."[42]

40 Sárándi 2016, p. 244.

41 Antal Kovács (Jászberény, 13 April 1915 – Szolnok, 23 November 1998), reserve lance corporal. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as a member of the 7th Battalion of the 32 Rifle Squadron; it was at this time that he received his rank of lance corporal. Babucs 1997, 7, Interview with Kovács.

42 Interview with Kovács.

The weapon collection operations carried out among the population of the surrounding villages led to further incidents. On 14 September 1940,[43] in the village of Somlyócsehi (today: Cehei, Romania), Gábor Veres (sic!), an Iron Guard member, resisted when he was ordered to surrender his hidden weapon. The house search was conducted by Cadet Sergeant András Jámbor,[44] reserve officer cadet of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest. Gábor Veres hit him in the chest and tried to take his pistol. The cadet sergeant shot him dead in self-defence. Late in the evening, First Lieutenant Bedő's military police squadron arrived in the village of Zovány (today: Zăuan, Romania). For the second time that day, pistol shots were fired at the squadron commander. One of the three shots struck through the torch on the first lieutenant's shoulder strap.

A number of new incidents occurred on 15 September 1940 and the subsequent days. At 5:45 a.m., unknown individuals hidden in the forest near Márkaszék (today: Marca, Romania) fired shots at one of the rifle platoons of the military police squadron marching from Szilágyipp to Márkaszék. At noon, the soldiers taking a long rest at the Márkaszék school were shot at by gunmen hidden in the cornfield northwest of the village. On the same day, the Hungarian army received information from the gendarmerie commander of Szilágy County that Iron Guard groups were present in Alsókaznacs and Felsőkaznacs, as well as in the areas south of the two villages. The commander asked for security forces to search and clear the area. Once again, the 32nd Infantry Regiment was given the task. The military police unit, under the command of First Lieutenant Zsolt Bedő, contained members of the 8th and 9th Battalions of the 32nd Rifle Squadron, as well as a platoon of the 3rd Battalion of the 32nd Machine Gun Squadron, both of Jászberény. Re-enlisted Platoon Leader András Farkas participated in the enforcement action as the squad leader of the 1st Platoon of the 3rd Battalion of the 32nd Rifle Squadron. According to his recollection, they took up firing positions outside a settlement,

43 On this day, a ban on alcohol was introduced in the entire quartering area of the 2nd Corps. Babucs & Szabó 2013, p. 46.

44 No other personal data or information on his military service are available.

but did not engage in a firefight.[45] The military police unit of First Lieutenant Bedő was once again forced to use weapons in Felsőkaznacs and Cseres (today: Cerişa, Romania). The contemporary report of the 2nd Infantry Brigade states, "[...] as we were trying to round up the Iron Guard members who were hiding weapons, they attempted to escape at a moment they deemed convenient; the military police unit then used their weapons against them. One of the captured Iron Guard members was József Malaga, alleged perpetrator of the bomb attack at Ipp. 55 Iron Guard members fell at this place."[46]

On 16 September 1940, at 4:30 p.m., the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Rifle Squadron of Budapest arrived in the village of Halmosd (today: Halmăşd, Romania), where First Lieutenant Béla Barabás,[47] commander of the squadron, wanted to inquire with the mayor of the village about weapons possibly hidden in the village. The mayor led one of First Lieutenant Barabás' patrols to an empty house, and then hit the soldier standing next to him in the chest and ran away. Despite the "Stop!" command of the members of the patrol (Reserve Lance Corporal Zoltán Halász and Reserve Private József Perei), the mayor kept running, so the patrol shot him.

The last use of weapons took place on 18 September 1940. The 1st Battalion of the 32nd Rifle Squadron (150 soldiers, 136 rifles, eight machine guns, two transport vehicles) under the command of First Lieutenant Kálmán Keviczky of Keveháza[48] received the following order: "Boys, the Colonel says that 'the

45 András Farkas (Medgyesegyháza, 2 September 1914 – Szolnok, 31 January 2008), re-enlisted platoon leader, professional Special Service sergeant from 1 November 1942. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as the squad leader of the 3rd Battalion of the 32nd Machine Gun Squadron. Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, András Farkas, Subordinate Officers' Documents Collector No. 3877, Babucs 1996, 15, interview with Farkas.

46 Military History Archives, 1st Corps Command, Box No. 489. 1940. Statement of weapon use on the territory of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Command. 44993/pres. – 1940.

47 Béla Barabás (Szeged, 2 December 1915 – n. a.), first lieutenant, armoured corps captain from 20 August 1943. At the time of the entry into Transylvania, he was commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Rifle Squadron. Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, Béla Barabás, ODC No. 305/3426, Babucs & Maruzs 2007, pp. 110–111.

48 Kálmán Keviczky of Keveháza (Ruttka, 21 August 1909 – New York, 27 July 1998), first lieutenant, captain from 1 May 1941. At the time of the entry into Transylvania he was

bullets of the Thirty-Second never miss.'"[49] The Hungarian soldiers conducted a house search in the village of Kémer (today: Camăr, Romania) and arrested four individuals suspected of being members of the Iron Guard. Reserve Sergeant József Czakó[50] received the task of taking the arrested suspects to Szilágynagyfalu in transport vehicles. The wheel of one of the carts broke. What happened next can be found out from the account of Sándor K. Szabó, one of the three reserve lance corporals assigned to the patrol:

> Czakó orders everyone to get off the cart. We surround the prisoners on the footpath next to the trees, and then just stand there and look at the cart stuck in the rut. One of the prisoners says something to his companions in Romanian, and Czakó growls at him:
>
> "Shut your mouth!"
>
> The man gestures unequivocally that he has some business to do in the forest. Czakó silences him again:
>
> "Wait for your turn."
>
> The prisoners stand huddled in a close group. We surround them at a distance of two or three steps. My rifle hangs loosely under my left arm (I'm a left-handed shooter), while the others hold theirs in their right hand.
>
> We look away from the four people herded together like sheep, watching the carters who are struggling with the cart.
>
> The moment, I confess, was tempting; the prisoners run away, and in two or three steps they are disappearing into the forest. We yell after them.
>
> "Stop!"
>
> But they keep running like mad… A pistol cracks, one of them falls, the rifle rumbles under my arm, in my left hand, another one falls. In an instant, all four prisoners are lying on the dry leaves, because in

commander of the 1st Battalion of the 32nd Rifle Squadron. He directed a military training film on the entry. Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, Kálmán Keviczky, ODC no. 48207.

49 Szabó K. 1991, p. 147.

50 No other personal data or information on his military service are available.

the meantime rifle shots were fired here and there, and none of them missed.

We stand petrified, looking at each other with pale faces; we don't understand how these people dared to risk an escape.

We looked at the wounded hoping that we could help them and deliver them as ordered, but there was no way to help: they were all dead.

Czakó and I start pondering about what to do with them, as it is forbidden to carry dead bodies. We consult for a long time, when all of a sudden we hear horse hooves pounding in the distance, and we see First Lieutenant Keviczky galloping toward us. He starts shouting from a considerable distance.

"Czakó! What happened?"

"First Lieutenant, Sir! I humbly report..." he begins and tells in detail what happened.

"Why didn't you watch them more closely?" Keviczky asks us.

"It's not our fault, First Lieutenant, Sir," we answer unanimously.

After pondering briefly, our First Lieutenant orders the men to be buried. The spades and shovels are taken out of the toolboxes on the carts, and the infantry soldiers begin to dig the graves.

The funeral was short; the First Lieutenant said a short speech, and the sad act was concluded with a silent prayer.

On the way back, our journey was quiet and we were speechless, because each of us thought of the four lives that were discarded so thoughtlessly, almost as if in a suicide.[51]

During these days, the 2nd Infantry Regiment of Budapest also participated in security operations, but no weapons were used. After the reports sent to the regiment on 13 September 1940 recounted the crimes that "armed Romanians" committed on the territory bounded by Szilágysomlyó in the north – Szilágyperecsen (today: Pericei, Romania) in the north – Szilágycsécs in the east – Szilágybadacson (today: Bădăcin, Romania) in the north – Somlyógyőrtelek

51 Szabó K. 1991, pp. 153–154.

(today: Giurtelecu Şimleului, Romania) in the east – Somlyóújlak (today: Uileacu Şimleului, Romania) in the east – Szilágycseh (today: Cehu Silvaniei, Romania), Colonel Imre Kolossváry,[52] commander of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, issued the following order:

> "The two rifle squadrons and the two machine gun squadrons formed from the 1st and respectively the 3rd Battalions, under the command of Captains Latzkovits[53] and Berdefi,[54] will search and clear of gangs the areas designated below on the 14th and 15th of the current month. Reprisals should be applied immediately, on the spot. Tough officers and sub-officers are to be assigned for the roles of platoon commander and squad leader, and the military police squadron should be comprised of volunteers as much as possible. If necessary, the squadron is to take hostages from the villages in the designated area. The 1st Battalion will search the western, and the 3rd Battalion the eastern side."[55]

According to the order, Captain Berdefi's unit combed the area northeast of Szilágysomlyó. While executing its mission, the squadron found nothing but a few rifle cartridges and bayonets.[56] According to the report of Captain Berdefi, on 14 September 1940, at 3:30 p.m., the following incident occurred:

52 vitéz Imre Kolossváry (Eger, 14 October 1888 – Mátraháza, 30 January 1970), colonel, major general from 1 May 1941. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as commander of the 2nd Infantry Regiment. Szakály 2003, pp. 182–183.

53 Béla Latzkovits (Szeged, 11 September 1896 – n. a.), captain, lieutenant colonel from 1 July 1944. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as commander of one of the rifle squadrons of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment. Military History Archives, Registry Sheets No. 1386/1896, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1939. B. Matters regarding personnel.

54 Győző Berdefi (Budapest, 5 March 1906 – ?, 1971), captain, major from 1 July 1944. He participated in the entry into Transylvania as commander of the 7th Battalion of the 2nd Rifle Squadron. Military Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum, Győző Berdefi, ODC No. 4270.

55 Military History Archives, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1940. Annexes of diaries from the period of mobilisation and entry into Transylvania. Annex 63 Searching for Vlach gangs (13 September 1940).

56 Military History Archives, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1940. Annexes of diaries from the period of mobilisation and entry into Transylvania. Annex 63 Searching for Vlach gangs (13 September 1940), a report by Captain Győző Berdefi on the operations of the military police squadron (Szilágyperecsen, 21 September 1940).

> "[...] under the command of Captain Tábori,[57] we conducted a search on a farm situated 2 km north of Badacson, during which a bayonet and eight live cartridges were found. The old woman at the farm resisted the house search and wounded one of the members of the infantry with her pocket knife (a minor scratch). According to the civilian attendant present at the scene, the old woman is feeble-minded. I also detained her foster son /a released soldier/ present at the farm. [...] During the operation of the squadron, no Romanian armed gangs were found, and no firearms or explosives were discovered."[58]

According to the summary on weapon use on the territory under command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade prepared at the time, Colonel Heim sought to explain why he had not encouraged a thorough investigation of the armed retaliations by the military police units of the 32nd Infantry Regiment in his subsequent report:

> "[...] I did not scrutinise cases of weapon use in my capacity as the commanding officer, because I did not see the need for this. [...] In all the cases that occurred, I saw either [...] an attack or an imminent threat thereof, and therefore I found every weapon use to be a legitimate use of weapons carried out in accordance with the orders issued."[59]

In addition to the use of weapons by the military police units in the Szilágyipp area, the other most significant case of armed retaliation occurred in Ördögkút, situated in the Meszes Mountains, on 9 September 1940. The units participating in that incident were the 1st Hajdú Battalion of the 11th Infantry

57 István Tábori (Szolnok, 14 October 1915 – n. a.), lieutenant, first lieutenant from 1 September 1940. He participated in the mobilisation and entry into Transylvania as section commander of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment. Military History Archives, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1939. B. Matters regarding personnel.

58 Military History Archives, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Box No. 6. 1940. Annexes of diaries from the period of mobilisation and entry into Transylvania. Annex 63 Searching for Vlach gangs (13 September 1940); a report by Captain Győző Berdefi on the operations of the military police squadron (Szilágyperecsen, 21 September 1940).

59 Military History Archives, 1st Corps Command, Box No. 489. 1940. Statement of weapon use on the territory of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Command. 44993/pres. – 1940.

Regiment of Debrecen, the 22nd Border Guard Battalion of Debrecen and the 3rd Battalion of the 4th Infantry Brigade of Sopron.[60]

Some other incidents which are no longer possible to investigate occurred as well, such as the one at Omboztelke (today: Mureşenii de Câmpie, Romania). After 1945, the members of the local landowner family, Count András Wass of Czege, his wife and his son, Albert Wass, were accused by the Romanian authorities of provoking the incident.[61]

As mentioned in the introduction, there are some who – based on nothing more than panic-mongering[62] – see the entry of the Hungarian Royal Army into Transylvania as a series of atrocities and regard the Hungarian rule between 1940 and 1944 as one of the failed experiments of the old Hungary. Twenty-two years had passed since the defeat of the Hungarian nation and the disintegration of Hungary in the autumn of 1918. However, the relations between Hungary and Romania had become extremely strained even before 1918 (as demonstrated by the exterminations of Hungarians in Transylvania in the 1848–1849 Revolution and the invasion of Transylvania by Romania in 1916), further aggravated by Romanian imperial rule in Transylvania until 1940. The situation between the two countries was already characterised by tensions due to differences in the cultural background of the two nations as well. These tensions became even more acute as a result of rumours of various murders and atrocities, the occasional hostile behaviour of the Romanian population and the recklessness of their armed groups – which provoked martial law measures.

When Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland were returned to Hungary, 550,000 fully armed and equipped soldiers were involved. It is a miracle that weapons were used only a few times. Even though the Hungarian authorities tried to deal humanely with the Romanian population – while the Hungarians in Southern Transylvania were constantly being harassed by the Romanians – in 1944 the Romanian army did not forego the opportunity to take revenge for "the Hungarian retaliation of 1940". The Maniu Guards, arriving in the wake

60 Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, pp. 23–24.
61 Illésfalvi 2004, p. 68; Illésfalvi, Szabó & Számvéber 2005, p.24.
62 Ablonczy 2017, p. 58.

of the Red Army and the Royal Romanian Army, which invaded Szeklerland and Northern Transylvania in the autumn of 1944, took revenge in Szárazajta, Csíkszereda, Csíkszentdomokos, Gyergyószentmiklós, Egeres, Bánffyhunyad, Páncélcseh, Magyarzsombor, Gyanta, Magyarremete and Kishalmágy (today: Aita Seacă, Miercurea Ciuc, Sândominic, Gheorgheni, Aghireşu, Huedin, Panticeu, Zimbor, Ginta, Remetea, Hălmăgel, all in Romania) for imagined or real grievances suffered in 1940, with the knowledge of the Romanian state, which transported tens of thousands of Hungarians to internment camps in the Romanian Old Kingdom.[63]

63 Gál 2005, p. 41–44; Benkő 2011.

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Personnel administration documents of non-commissioned officers and enlisted soldiers (born after 1900)

PHOTOS

Figure 1. The 32nd Infantry Regiment at Vállaj, on 5 September 1940.
(Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 2. The band of the 2nd Infantry Regiment at the roadblocks in front of Hadad, on 7 September 1940. (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 3. Concert of Hungarian army band at the main square of Szilágyperecsen (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 4. First Lieutenant Zsolt Bedő (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 5. Lance Corporal Antal Kovács (Photographed earlier as a private without rank. (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 6. Re-enlisted Platoon Leader András Farkas (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 7. First Lieutenant Béla Barabás (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 8. First Lieutenant Kálmán Keviczky (Photographed already as Captain) (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 9. Captain Győző Berdefi
(Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

Figure 10. Procession of the 7th Rifle Squadron of the 2nd Infantry Regiment led by Captain Győző Berdefi at the occasion of their homecoming. Jászberény, 24 September 1940. (Collection of Babucs Zoltán)

JÓZSEF BOTLIK

TERRITORIAL CHANGES OF CARPATHIAN RUTHENIA: 1919–1945

The territory of Carpathian Ruthenia (in Czech: *Podkarpatská Rus*) between the two World Wars differs from both the preceding and current Carpathian Ruthenia after 1945. This has led to considerable misunderstanding of this concept, making it important to analyse and describe its geographical extent and the changes in its name from the beginnings in the early 19th century to the present day.

The current wording of the expression first appeared in print on 27 October 1889 in the header of a political and social weekly newspaper launched in Munkács (today: Mukachevo, Ukraine) under the title *Kárpátalja* (Carpathian Ruthenia, literally: Subcarpathia). Yet its history goes back to much earlier times, which thus need to be discussed. Although in a slightly different form, it already appeared more than seven decades earlier, in 1817, in the lexicon describing 'Current and old nations and countries' by *Johann Hübner* (1668–1731), which was revised, supplemented and published by *Franz Xaver Sperl* (?–?) in 1815. This was published by printer and bookseller *János Tamás Trattner, Jr.* (1789–1824) "in a Hungarianised form" in 1816–1817. In the location name lexicon, one of the regions of Szepes County is called "Kárpát allyai" [literally: base of the Carpathians],[1] which must have been known many decades earlier.

1 Hübner 1817, p. 112.

The concept was also adopted by the Rusyn ethnic group (in Latin: ruthen, rutén) living in the county, and then in the neighbouring Sáros and other counties, in a simple word-for-word translation: подкарпатский, '*podkarpatszkij*', i.e. in the form of *Subcarpathian*. Later it also appeared in the first line of a poem by *Alexander Vasilyevich Dukhnovych* (Олександр Духнович, 1803–1865), a Greek Catholic priest, poet and writer, as Подкарпатский русины '*Podkarpatskij rusin*', i.e. in the form of Carpathian Ruthenian, which became widespread primarily due to his literary works. The poem was later set to music, and thus became the national anthem of Rusyns living mainly in Central Europe. The concept of подкарпатский soon spread in Rusyn Greek Catholic publications and various works and textbooks, which were published primarily in Buda by the printing company of the Royal Central Pest University. The concept already appeared officially in the constitution of the Society of Saint Basil the Great – Общество Святого Василия Великого ('Obshchestvo Sviatoho Vasyliia Velykoho') – founded in 1864 in Ungvár (today: Uzhhorod, Ukraine),[2] which was approved by the area council in Buda on 15 December.

Published in Munkács, the most populous town of Bereg County, the weekly newspaper entitled *Munkács* reported in the spring of 1886 that *István Thomán* (1862–1940), one of the favourite pupils of world-famous composer and pianist *Franz Liszt* (1811–1886), had given a highly successful concert in the Csillag Hotel "in the little Carpathian Ruthenian town".[3]

In the premiere issue of the weekly newspaper entitled *Kárpátalja* launched on 27 October 1889 in Munkács, editor *István Csomár* stated in his opening piece entitled *Viszontlátás* that the newspaper "[...] received this name when christened because it is aimed at furthering the interests of peoples living at the base of the north-eastern Carpathians, whilst interpreting their emotions and wishes".[4] The Hungarians living there had already used the word *Kárpátalja* as a geographical name constructed similarly to expressions such as "*Hegyalja*" ([literally: base of the mountain] and "*Mecsekalja*" [literally: base of the Mecsek

2 Mayer 1977, p. 207.
3 Popovics 2004, p. 13.
4 Csomár 1889.

mountains] which had been used for many decades, and it only referred to some parts in the Great Plain and the surrounding hills at the base of the Carpathians. This denoted the two sides along the line of settlements Ungvár, Szerednye, Munkács and Nagyszőllős (today: Uzhhorod, Serednie, Mukachevo, Vynohradiv, all in Ukraine). Changes in the concept of Carpathian Ruthenia began at the turn of the 19th and 20th century when its territory expanded significantly.

At the initiative of *Yuliy Firtsak* (in Rusyn: Юлий Фирцак, 1836–1912), the Greek Catholic bishop in Munkács,[5] 14 members of parliament of Bereg, Ung, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties submitted an application entitled *Memorandum on the promotion and flowering of the intellectual and material relationships between Ruthenians living at the base and south of the north-eastern Carpathians* to *Baron Dezső Bánffy* (1843–1911), Prime Minister.[6] The printed, 9-page petition already contained the *Kárpátalja* (Carpathian Ruthenia) concept in its title in the form of *Kárpátok alján* [literally: Subcarpathia]. In the text, however, the four counties above were referred to as the *region south of the north-eastern Carpathians*[7] on two occasions. In the memorandum, *kárpátaljai vidék* [literally: Subcarpathian region] occurs three times, *kárpátalji vidék* [literally: Subcarpathian region] once, *kárpátalji nép* [literally: Subcarpathian people] eight times [!], and *kárpátaljai nép* [literally: people of the Subcarpathians] once.[8] The *Memorandum* urges the intellectual and material empowering of the Ruthenian population of the above four counties, while clearly defining the macro-region and its inhabitants as a *Subcarpathian region* and *Subcarpathian people,* respectively.

The objectives of the *Memorandum* were pursued by the Hungarian government. The movement was initially called *Ruthenian* and then – for national policy reasons – referred to as the "*mountain-region economic*

5 Magocsi & Pop 2002, p. 119.

6 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár (MNL OL.) K 26. 1902–XXXI.–1134. sz. 153–158.

7 MNL OL. K 26. 1902–XXXI.–1134. sz. 154, 160.

8 MNL OL. K 26. 1902–XXXI.–1134. sz. 153–158 – Az Emlékirat oldalai [pages of the Memorandum]: pp. 1, 2, 3, 7–8.

campaign" [in Hungarian: *hegyvidéki gazdasági akció*]. It was launched on 4 February 1897, led by *Ignác Darányi* (1849–1927), Minister of Agriculture. After thorough inter-ministerial analyses and negotiations, *Ede Egán* (1851–1901), an economist, was nominated as Ministerial Commissioner, who established the Mountain-Region Office of the Hungarian Royal Agricultural Ministry in the district capital of Szolyva (today: Svalyava, Ukraine).[9] This marked the start of what we would now call a major rural development effort, with the following main elements: providing poor Rusyn farmers with national farming leases and mountain pastures, livestock development; founding credit cooperatives in order to break down the 500 and 1000% [!] usury rates exorbitantly charged by Jews who immigrated from Galicia en masse, providing low-interest loans, establishing national warehouse stores, where goods were sold more cheaply than in grocery stores, etc. The two movements of emigration and continuous relocation from Galicia that initially appeared "instinctive", with high Jewish population growth, also known as the "Khazar question", have been intertwined since at least the 1870s. In this context, the Hungarian government's mountain-region economic campaign was present as a third element from 1897.[10]

The spread of Jewish inhabitants who immigrated en masse from the neighbouring Austrian province of Galicia was significantly promoted by "Act XVII of 1867 on Jewish equality in terms of civil and political rights" adopted by *King Franz Joseph I (Habsburg)* (1867–1916) on 27 December 1867, five months after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise.[11] The legislation opened up great new horizons for the large numbers of Jews immigrating from Galicia and those already residing in Hungary. In our view, this was in reality a nationwide *expansion* of the Jewish population, while from a leftist, liberal point of view it represented the *growth* of the Jewish population. We consider the relevant

9 The mountain-region office was later relocated to the centrally located, more appropriate town of Munkács.

10 Egan 1900, p. 199.

11 The wording of the Act comprises two sections: "§ 1 The Jewish population of the country shall also be deemed entitled to each and every civil and political right as those of the Christian population. § 2 Any contrary acts, customs and regulations shall hereby be repealed."

research results of *Alajos Kovács*,[12] one of the best statisticians and demographers of that period, corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1920–1949), director and later president of the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, to be definitive, who establishes in the title of his most important work that an *occupation* had occurred.[13]

Emigration to overseas, mainly to the United States of America, took place in parallel with immigration from Galicia between 1870s and early 1910s in north-eastern Upper Hungary, including Carpathian Ruthenia – especially in Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, Máramaros and Zemplén, Szabolcs and Szatmár Counties. At the time, more than 350,000 mainly Ruthenian [Rusyn], Hungarian and Tót [Slovakian] people emigrated overseas from north-eastern Upper Hungary with the assistance of several thousand agents operating in secret without official permits as well as officially with passports.[14] At the same time, by the end of the above period, approximately 250,000 Jews had relocated – mostly without official Hungarian control – mainly in the place of the emigrants. The houses, lands, mountain pastures, production equipment, i.e. all of the assets, of those who had no choice but to leave their homeland because of their debts were acquired by usurers and innkeepers. Many of them individually received ten,

12 Alajos Kovács (until 1943 dolányi Kovács [literally: Kovács of Dolány], then Alajos Dolányi 1877–1963) was sentenced by the Budapest People's Court to five years in prison and full confiscation of property in 1947 on charges of crimes against the people, which was then reduced to two years following appeal. He was released from prison in April 1950; in the meantime, in 1949, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences revoked his membership.

13 According to the 1910 census data: 19.9% of owners of land larger than 1,000 acres; 19.0% of landowners of 200–1,000 acres; 73.2% and 62.0% of the largeholders in the aforementioned two groups; 27.1% of tenant farmers of 100–200 acres; 43.9% of industrial officials; 54.0% of sole traders; 42.0% and 62.1% of loan and trade officials; 85.0% of credit institution owners; 48.9% of doctors; 45.2% of lawyers; 25.6% of those engaged in the judiciary; 37.6% of private engineers; 42.4% of journalists; 26.2% of those engaged in literature and arts were Jews; 1. Kovács 1922, pp. 40–48.

14 In north-eastern Upper Hungary, including Carpathian Ruthenia, according to official data, 91,742 emigrants, i.e. 27.5% of those who left, returned to their homeland between 1899 and 1913. If the number of those who returned home (even before 1899, thousands returned, but were not officially registered!) is deducted, the number of Rusyn, Hungarian and Slovakian emigrants is more or less identical to that of Jews immigrating from Galicia in the period concerned, estimated at 250,000.

twenty or even many more houses depending on the debts of the emigrating Ruthenians, Hungarians and Slovakians, and these holdings were registered officially in land registries. Assets were then handed over to Jewish families relocating from Galicia.[15] In this manner, *an organised exchange of people took place for decades* in the aforementioned seven counties.

Due to the results of the mountain-region economic campaign – and especially due to the successes achieved in doing away with the 500 and 1000% [!] usury rates – the lives of the Commissioner of the Minister of Agriculture and his colleagues were in constant danger. Several assassination attempts were made against them, and *Egán* was murdered in a targeted assassination on 20 September 1901.[16]

On the first of January 1901, the daily political newspaper *Ellenzék* [literally: Opposition] published in Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania), which paid considerable attention to the progress of Subcarpathian rural development, started to publish the series entitled "*Kazár földön*" [literally: On Khazar land] by owner and editor-in-chief *Miklós Bartha* (1847–1905), one of the most renowned and influential publicists of his time. His works exploring the social and economic situation and the peculiar conditions in Carpathian Ruthenia at that time became a volume and were published in a book the very same year, at the end of 1901.[17] His book was the first lasting work in Hungary in the sociographic genre, a master work. Bartha consciously called those people "*Khazars*" who were restricted in their commercial and financial activities and forced by the authorities to leave the Austrian Empire's adjacent province of Galicia, and thus relocated to Carpathian Ruthenia en masse, and mainly engaged in usury and innkeeping, in order to differentiate them from the already integrated Jews promoting the growth of the Hungarian homeland.

Mainly as a result of the controversies concerning the so-called *Khazar question* analysed above, the national press introduced and popularised the macroregional concept *Carpathian Ruthenia*, which within a short period of

15 Botlik 2018, pp. 164–190, pp. 304–307.
16 Bihar 1901, p. 47.
17 Bartha 1901, p. 328.

time was fixed in public opinion as an umbrella term for Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties. All of this originated primarily from the continuous, outrageous attacks in the liberal press against *Ede Egán* and the state's rural development activity in Carpathian Ruthenia. While the reality was the following: "To abolish both the Khazars' privileges and the Ruthenians' servitude: that is the aim of the mountain-region campaign," wrote *Bartha*. "This will be the harmonious settlement of rights and obligations. Restraining those who are too strong, and supporting the weak. [...] The mountain-region campaign is not an anti-Semitic movement. No Jews shall experience any illegality, injustice or unfairness. No concrete complaint could be lodged against Egán. *Prior to writing these lines* [November 1901], *376 newspaper announcements were published against him. But there is not a single letter in this fuss that contains a specific charge.*"[18] The aforementioned book by *Bartha* entitled *'On Khazar land'* was published shortly after the assassination of *Egán* on 20 September 1901, dedicated to his memory. Under the ministerial leadership of *József Kazy* (1856–1923), the mountain-region campaign continued.[19]

At the turn of the 20th century, this is how the umbrella term Carpathian Ruthenia was established under these difficult circumstances, denoting Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties, and *thereby creating a new macro-region that existed until the end of 1918*. It covered an area of 17,945 km^2, and had a population of 848,428 people according to the 1910 census, of which 356,067 spoke Ruthenian (41.96%) as their mother tongue, 267,091 Hungarian (31.48%), and the rest Oláh (Romanian), German and Tót (Slovak). At the time, 128,791 (19.88%) Jews were recorded, which meant that every fifth inhabitant was Jewish in the operating core area of the mountain-region economic campaign. In fact, however, there may have been many thousand more, because – disregarding their religious affiliation – many of them reported that they were Hungarians or Germans.[20]

18 Bartha 1901, p. 323 [emphasis added by B. J.].

19 The Hungarian state spent a huge amount, 34,280,693 koronas, on Subcarpathian rural development between 1897 and 1918, while only 848,676 koronas of taxes and duties were collected in the counties concerned.

20 At the time of the 1910 census, 128,791 Jews lived in Carpathian Ruthenia, a total of 80,631

It must be stated here that in addition to the new Carpathian Ruthenia macroregional expression, the use of the name *Felvidék* [in English: Upper Hungary, literally: high region] was also natural in the early 20th century in this region. As a geographical, historical and ethnographic expression, it was preceded by the term *Felföld* [in English: Highlands, literally: high land], which was used as an antonym for the Great Plain from the 16th century. Before the early 19th century, the Hungarian terms *Felföld* ("Highlands") and *Felső-Magyarország* ("Upper, northern parts of Royal Hungary") were interchangeable, but referred to a wider region than the contemporary *Felvidék* ("Upper Hungary"), which only encompassed former lands of Royal Hungary now found in modern-day Slovakia. Even though Felvidék was originally used as a term of literary theory and cultural geography, it replaced the former two terms. Naturally, Upper Hungary did not encompass the *Kisalföld* region, the lowland region north of the Danube, which includes the completely Hungarian-populated *Csallóköz* [in Slovakian: Žitný ostrov] and *Mátyusföld* [in Slovakian: Matúšova zem]. In their joint work, the two renowned geographers, *Béla Bulla* (1906–1962), member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and *Tibor Mendöl* (1905–1966) divide Upper Hungary into two parts. North-western Upper Hungary reaches from the Devín Gate over the Little Carpathians to the former Sáros County, the source of the Ondava. North-eastern Upper Hungary extends from around the *Zboró* (today: Zborov, Slovakia) *Pass* to the *Borsa* (today: Prislop, Romania) *Canyon* in the upper south-eastern corner of the former Máramaros County.[21] Leaders, deputies and competent experts of Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros Counties concerned by these important questions quite naturally also participated at the *emigration congress of Upper Hungary* held between 31 May and 1 June 1902 in Miskolc.[22]

On 25 December 1918, the Károlyi government published People's Act X of 21 December 1918 *on the autonomy of Rusyn people living in Hungary* in the

in the neighbouring Szatmár, Szabolcs and Zemplén Counties, 19,798 in Sáros and Szepes Counties, i.e. a grand total of 236,414, which was more than twice as many compared to 30 years before. The 1910 census of the countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. Vol. VI. Issued by the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1920, pp. 114, 116.

21 Bulla & Mendöl 1947, pp. 381, 444.

22 National Hungarian Economic Federation, 1902.

National Law Archive, in respect of the Carpathian Ruthenia macro-region.[23] The legislation provided Ruthenian people with a right of self-determination regarding home affairs, justice, public education, community culture, religious practice and language use, and set forth that from the main parts of Máramaros, Ugocsa, Bereg and Ung Counties of the Hungarian People's Republic populated by Ruthenians, "an autonomous legal area (governorate) shall be established under the name of Ruszka-Krajna ('Руська Краина', [in English: Ruthenian Province])". People's Act X dated 21 December [!] was also published in Rusyn (Ruthenian) with the signature of Government Members, under the title of '*Народный законъ числа 10. про самоуправу руського народу живущого на Угорщини*'.[24] *With this, Carpathian Ruthenia as a macroregion ceased to exist.*

Implementation of People's Act X of 1918 began in the first days of January 1919 and continued even after the proclamation of the Soviet Republic on 21 March in a legal area called the Ruthenian Commissariat with Munkács as the centre. The Rusyn local government was further developed by the Revolutionary Governing Council on the basis of national self-determination as well. Yet, this was only possible in a smaller part of the Ruszka-Krajna area designated under the Károlyi government: from the Ung river east to the region of Máramaros County north of the Tisza. Theoretically, the Revolutionary Governing Council would have established the Ruszka-Krajna Governorate with an area of 20,130 km^2 and 980,000 inhabitants in total. The new administrative and political unit comprised the majority of the above four counties in Carpathian Ruthenia, except for their regions populated by Hungarians; in addition to certain districts of Zemplén and Sáros Counties, or a part of them where Rusyns lived. It must be pointed out that in the spring of 1919 the latter areas, all of Sáros County and the northern part of Zemplén County – as of 12 January, even Ungvár – were under Czechoslovak occupation, while the southern part of Máramaros County was under Romanian military occupation, and in early

23 MNL OL. Microfilm. 7052. no. box. title 8. item X. 24 December 1918. 6570/M. E. I. no. document.

24 Narodnyj zakon čisla 10. pro samoupravu ruskogo narodu živuŝogo na Ugoršini. Subcarpathian Regional National Archives, Ungvár–Beregszász. Fond 59. opisz (item) 1. odinicja zberihannya nomer (reference number) sztr. 1.(page)

January the Romanian army began to occupy the northern part of Máramaros as well. Consequently, the Ruthenian Commissariat could only be established in an area of about 9,700 km^2 with approximately 460,000 inhabitants, and its administration was only partially organised.[25] The joint attack carried out by the Czechoslovak and Romanian armies during the final days of April 1919 ended the merely 40-day rule of the Soviet Republic in Carpathian Ruthenia.

At the hearings held at the Paris Peace Conference between 7 June and 12 August 1919, the temporary western borders of Carpathian Ruthenia were decided, which were, in the beginning, called demarcation lines. These "more or less follow eastwards" along the railway track between Csap (today: Chop, Ukraine) and Ungvár, "leaving Ungvár and its surroundings to Podkarpatská Rus", then run along the Ung river to the Uzsok (today: Uzhok, Ukraine) Pass, i.e. the Polish national border.[26] There were 32 municipalities in this more than 60 km long narrow zone, located along the Ung river designated as a separating section, i.e. west of the temporary Podkarpatská Rus–Slovak regional border. Therefore, these villages were incorporated into Slovakia, but their public administration was managed from Ungvár.[27] At the same time, the demarcation line south of Ung County crossed the railway track at some point between Csap and Ungvár, and the three villages located on its eastern side (Kisrát and Nagyrát and Tiszaásvány (today: Rativtsi and Tysaashvan, Ukraine) were also incorporated into Slovakia, with their public administration belonging to Bratislava.[28]

The Podkarpatská Rus created at the time, i.e. the restricted territory of Carpathian Ruthenia, became under international law an integral part of the artificial state that had never existed before, but had been created at the time as

25 Pinczés 1999, p. 11.

26 Král 1924, p. 3.

27 Statistický lexikon obcí v Podkarpatské Rusi (1928). Nákladem Státního Úřadu Statistického, V Praze. p. 31.

28 Their population according to the 1910 census: Kisrát 599, Nagyrát 606 and Tiszaásvány 404, for a total of 1,609 persons, of which 1,591 were Hungarians (98.88%). Public Administration Atlas of Hungary 1914. Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. 2000. pp. 125, 139, 161.

part of the *Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye on the recognition of the independence of Czechoslovakia and the protection of minority peoples* signed on 10 September 1919. In Articles 10–13 of Chapter II of the Treaty, Czechoslovakia obligated itself to "organise the territory of Ruthenians living south of the Carpathians in the form of such an autonomous entity that has a most extensive local government compatible with the entity of the Czechoslovak State". Its elected representatives were to participate in the Czechoslovak parliament's work, and "officials of the Ruthenian area will be selected from inhabitants of this area as far as possible".[29] Despite its international obligation and domestic political promises later made on several occasions, the Czechoslovak government delayed the implementation of Subcarpathian autonomy for almost two decades. We assume that the main reason behind this was that if Prague honoured its obligation as early as the beginning of 1920s, Slovakia should also have been granted the right of local governance as expected. In light of the Slovak national movement's efforts at the time, this would have resulted in the dissolution of Czechoslovakia by the end of the decade.

The Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye incorporated more than two thirds (70.7%) of the Carpathian Ruthenia macro-region (17,945 km^2), a total of 12,694 km^2 with 606,568 inhabitants, into Czechoslovakia, thereby *modifying the territory of Carpathian Ruthenia for the first time.*[30] Of course, the Treaty did not mention the ethnographic line or its inhabitants at the foot of the Carpathians at the north-eastern border of the Hungarian Great Plain – the Ung Plain, the Beregi-Tiszahát region and the Ugocsa Plain – which was essentially populated exclusively by Hungarians.

Few are aware that the capital of Máramaros County, Máramarossziget (today: Sighetu Marmației, Romania),[31] would have been incorporated into Czechoslovakia by a decision made at the Paris Peace Conference, in order to

29 Halmosy 1983, pp. 89–93.

30 Král 1924, pp. 10–11.

31 According to the 1910 census, the population of Máramarossziget: 21,370 persons, of which 17,542 Hungarians (80.7%), 1,257 Germans (5.9%), 2,001 Romanians (9.3%). Public Administration Atlas of Hungary 1914. Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. 2000, p. 133.

prevent the country's border from crossing the Csap–Beregszász–Nagyszőllős–Huszt–Máramarossziget–Rahó–Kőrösmező railway line at two places, around Taracköz (today: Teresva, Ukraine) and then at the Visóvölgy (today: Valea Vişeului, Romania) stop. In June 1920, the Czechoslovak government granted Romania the 10 municipalities located along this railway line, together with the railway stations, "as evidence and guarantee of good friendship and neighbourly relations".[32]

The newly created territory of Carpathian Ruthenia was not yet fixed, because Czechoslovakia and Romania were unable to agree on the final establishment of the national border for years. This was only determined on 4 May 1921, when a correction was also made. According to *Jiří Král,* Czech geographer, all of this ended in "a few but relatively drastic changes to the Czechoslovak borders".[33] The valley of the Tarna stream in Ugocsa County, rich in coal and minerals, and four surrounding municipalities had to be handed over to Romania: Avaspatak , Bocskó, Nagytarna and Ugocsakomlós (today: Valea Seacă, Bocicău, Tarna Mare, Comlăuşa, all in Romania).[34] In addition, Czechoslovakia also handed over the glassworks operating at the site in Ferencvölgy (today: Valea lui Francisc, Romania) below Técső (today: Tiachiv, Romania), a former Hungarian crown city in Máramaros County.

Romania, however, had to provide compensation for Czechoslovakia's territorial losses. Therefore, in return, the "totally insignificant" western and north-western land between the Batár and Túr (today: Batar and Tur) rivers in Ugocsa County,[35] which was occupied by Romanian troops around 25 April

32 Beneš 1996, p. 35 – The locations concerned: Hosszúmező, Szarvaszó, Máramarossziget, Szigetkamara, Tiszaveresmart, Tiszakarácsonyfalva, Bocskó, Tiszalonka, Erdészvölgy and Visóvölgy (today: Câmpulung la Tisa, Sarasău, Sighetu Marmaţiei, Camara Sighet, Tisa [until 1964: Virişmort], Crăciuneşti, Bocicău, Lunca la Tisa, Kuzij and Valea Vişeului, all in Romania).

33 Král 1924, p. 7.

34 Their total population in 1910: 4,275 persons, of which 980 Hungarians (22.9%), the majority of which, 881 persons, were citizens of Nagytarna, and constituted a relative majority (45.6%) against the Romanian and Rusyn communities. Public Administration Atlas of Hungary 1914. Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. 2000. pp. 93, 97, 140, 163.

35 Král 1924, pp. 8, 10, 51, Statistický lexikon obcí v Podkarpatské Rusi 1928. VIII.

1919, was incorporated into Carpathian Ruthenia. The village of Halmi (today: Halmeu, Romania), the Transtisza capital of the Ugocsa district, however, still remained under Romanian jurisdiction, although three Hungarian villages in its neighbourhood were incorporated into Czechoslovakia. Two of these were located in Ugocsa: Akli and Fertősalmás (today: Okli and Fertešolmaš, Ukraine), as well as Nagypalád (today: Velyka Palad, Ukraine) in what had been Szatmár County: with a total of 2,851 inhabitants, of which 2,792 spoke Hungarian as their mother tongue (97.9%).[36]

As a result of the Czechoslovak–Romanian territory exchanges, the territory of Podkarpatská Rus decreased from 12,694 km^2 to 12,653 km^2, i.e. by 41 km^2, and its population to 581,059 persons.[37] Thus, *the territory of Carpathian Ruthenia was modified for the second time*, remaining unchanged for about two decades.

Meanwhile, the Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye signed on 10 September 1919 only mentioned "the territory of Ruthenians living south of the Carpathians", and there was nothing about the new Czech name of Carpathian Ruthenia. Only six months later, the constitution entitled the *Czechoslovak Republic Bill of Rights*[38] adopted by the Parliament on 29 February 1920, announced and entering into force on 6 March in Issue 121 of the compendium of laws and regulations, contained the new Czech name of Carpathian Ruthenia, *Podkarpatská Rus*, for the first time officially, and for the second time in the form of *Rusínsko.* The two official Czech concepts very soon became widespread thanks to the authorities. The second Czech expression for Carpathian Ruthenia, *Rusínsko*, was created following the example of the *Slovensko* name. Soon it also became known as *Ruszinszkó* in a "Hungarianised" form, which was included in the name of numerous Subcarpathian Hungarian, Rusyn and other parties, associations and even newspapers from the beginning

36 The population of Halmi according to the 1910 census: 3,455 persons, of which 3,371 Hungarians (97.6%), 51 Germans. Public Administration Atlas of Hungary 1914. Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. 2000. pp. 89, 110, 114, 139.

37 Král 1924, p. 7.

38 Official Hungarian publication: Czechoslovak Republic Bill of Rights. National Publishing Office, in Prague, 1923, 31 pages.

of the 1920s.[39] Between the two World Wars, Carpathian Ruthenia was referred to in Hungary as *Ruszinszkó*, while Upper Hungary was known as *Szlovenszkó* at the time around the Treaty of Trianon.[40]

It is evident that the above Czech *Podkarpatská* expression officially appearing in 1920 is in fact the word-for-word translation of the Hungarian *Kárpátalja* [literally: Subcarpathia, meaning Carpathian Ruthenia] concept. This is a fact, since the Carpathian Ruthenia geographical name already existed several decades earlier, as discussed earlier in this paper. This means that it does not reflect reality what some people have been saying for a long time, and even today, i.e. that the Hungarian name 'Kárpátalja' is a mirror translation of the Czech expression 'Podkarpatská' – which is nonsense. This can be traced back to the early 1930s. The originator was *Ivan Olbracht* (1882–1952), Czech writer and one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, who visited Carpathian Ruthenia on several occasions between 1931 and 1936, a territory always depicted by the Czechoslovak national propaganda as a success area of the country. It is a credit to Olbracht that in his sociographic writing he revealed the true situation of the region, in particular the extreme poverty that afflicted the Rusyn people, thus attracting the attention of everyone.[41] Following one of his – perhaps most famous – writings entitled '*Země beze jména*' ['*The nameless land*'] published in 1931, the unrealistic and misleading story about the occurrence of the *Podkarpatská Rus* expression spread, claiming that the Hungarian 'Kárpátalja' [literally: Subcarpathia] concept was a word-for-word translation of the Czech 'Podkarpatská'.[42]

39 For example: Ruszinszkó Hungarian Party, Ruszinszkó Hungarian Newspaper, Ruszinszkó Lawyers Association, Ruszinszkó Beekeepers Association.

40 Following the Treaty of Trianon, the concept of Upper Hungary changed, meaning every former Hungarian municipality incorporated into Czechoslovakia from Bratislava to the Ung river. At the same time, the country part also meant Slovakia, including the already detached lands mainly populated by Hungarians from Csallóköz to the western part of the Ung Plain.

41 Király 1984, p. 624 – Under the very same title 'The nameless land', Olbracht also published his poignant Subcarpathian reports collected in a volume in 1932.

42 Reissue: Olbracht 1956, p. 63.

With the First Vienna Award on 2 November 1938, the southern part of Carpathian Ruthenia populated by Hungarians was reunited with Hungary, and this was then considered to be *the easternmost part of Upper Hungary*. This was clearly stipulated by Act XXXIV of 1938 on *reuniting Upper Hungary areas annexed to the Hungarian Holy Crown with Hungary,* adopted on 4 November.[43] The legislation re-established Ung, Bereg and Ugocsa Counties with their returned historical territory, which were temporarily united in terms of public administration.[44] This southern Subcarpathian, Great Plain-like region – the Ung Plain south-east of the Ung river, the Beregi-Tiszahát region and the Ugocsa Plain – was considered by contemporary Hungarian public opinion to belong to Upper Hungary, up until the Soviet military occupation in November 1944.[45]

In the meantime, on 2 November 1938, the territory of Podkarpatská "below the Czechs", and thus *the territory of Carpathian Ruthenia changed for the third time*, meaning from then on the mountainous part mainly populated by Rusyns only. The size of Podkarpatská Rus decreased to 11,094 km^2; shortly before this, the Czechoslovak government had introduced governmental autonomy on 11 October 1938, retaining the territory as an integral part of Czechoslovakia. *András Bródy* (1895–1946), a politician with dual Hungarian–Rusyn identity, was appointed as Prime Minister, who proposed a referendum on which nation would have sovereignty over the mountainous Carpathian Ruthenia at the Council of Ministers on 25 October in Prague. As a result, the following day he was arrested and imprisoned on formal charges of "high

43 National Law Archive, 13 November 1938 (Issue 18) p. 532.

44 According to the census held on 15 December 1938, the geographical expansion of the two new counties together with the three cities – Ungvár, Munkács, Beregszász – and 133 villages was 2,023 km2 in total. They had a population of 276,041 persons, of which 236,046 were Hungarians (85.5%), 25,124 Ruthenians/Rusyns (9.1%), the rest spoke other languages as their mother tongue. Thirring 1939, pp. 456, 461, 474–475, 479, 487.

45 The northern part of Ugocsa, Nagyszőllős and its environs, was part of the mountainous Carpathian Ruthenia until its return in mid-March 1939. Its south-eastern region (319 km2) remained under Romanian rule until the Second Vienna Award on 30 August 1940 when it was reunited with Hungary, together with northern Transylvania. The government then re-established the historically independent Ugocsa County.

treason". *Ágoston Volosin* (Avgustyn Voloshyn, 1874–1945) of Hungarian–Rusyn origin, a Greek Catholic priest, became the head of the government, who developed a Ukrainian-oriented political system instead of a Rusyn-oriented one by dictatorial means. Gradually disengaging from Prague, he strived to transform the Podkarpatská Rus province with the capital Huszt (today: Khust, Ukraine) into an independent state and arbitrarily changed its name to *Carpatho-Ukraine* ('Карпатська Україна', 'Karpats'ka Ukrayina').[46]

After *Jozef Tiso* (until 1918 József Tisó, 1887–1947), Prime Minister of the Slovak Autonomous Region, declared the formation of an independent Slovakia on 14 March 1939, Avgustyn Voloshyn, Head of Government, also announced the independence of Carpatho-Ukraine in his radio speech the same evening. The following day, on the afternoon of 15 March, the national assembly, the Soim, was held for the first (and last) time, and elected Avgustyn Voloshyn as President. It then declared by law the independence of the Republic of Carpatho-Ukraine, headed by the President with Ukrainian as the official language. After that, Avgustyn Voloshyn escaped from the advancing Hungarian troops to Romania, and his system remained in place for only four and a half months.

Meanwhile, between 15 and 17 March 1939, the Royal Hungarian Army liberated mountainous Carpathian Ruthenia in the course of three days and reunited it with Hungary.[47] Since the Czechoslovak government did not draw the western boundary of Podkarpatská Rus for two decades, despite demands from Rusyn and Slovak politicians, provincial border fortifications entirely unsuitable for a national border closed off the Subcarpathian region which was returned to Hungary. The railway was in the direct vicinity of the demarcation line from Ungvár to the Uzsok Pass, with the nearby hills and mountainsides mostly belonging to Slovakia. In order to eliminate border uncertainties and secure the line, the Royal Hungarian Army launched an attack westward on the morning of 23 March. The following day, after a roughly 20-km-wide and 60-km-long advance the forces

46 According to the census in February 1939, the population of Carpatho-Ukraine was 552,124 persons, of which 413,481 were Ukrainians (75.9%), 25,894 Hungarians (4.8%), the rest Jews, Czechs and Slovaks, Romanians and other nationalities. The data of the census held in a climate of terror were distorted, the true population of Hungarians was 40,000.

47 Botlik 2005, pp. 261–259, 321–332.

stopped as the territory occupied by then (1,056 km^2, with 74 villages) was sufficient to securely hold the railway line and the public road between the valley of the Ung and Ungvár and the Uzsok Pass. As part of the operations in March and April 1939, Subcarpathian territory of 12,141 km^2 in total, with 464 villages, including the city of Huszt, was reunited with Hungary.[48] *That is how the fourth change in the territory of Carpathian Ruthenia occurred.* In the coming months the use of the expression was uncertain: Kárpátalja [Subcarpathia], Ruténföld [Ruthenian Land], Podkarpatska [Podkarpatsko], Ruszinszkó [Rusinsko], Ruszinföld [Rusyn Land], and even Hungarian Ruszinszkó were used by Hungarian authorities and the media. Finally, Kárpátalja [Subcarpathia] and Ruténföld [Ruthenian Land] stuck. In the beginning, the majority of the inhabitants of the returned region were named Hungarian–Russian people as before, from the turn of 1939–1940 the endonym of the people, Rusyn [Ruthenian], spread, and in the spring and early summer of 1940 the Latin rutén [Ruthenian] name used from the 13th century once again stuck.

As a natural result of the operations in the mountainous part of Carpathian Ruthenia that was reunited with Hungary, military control was introduced, which was replaced by national public administration on 7 July 1939. Section 6 of Act VI of 1939 on *reuniting the Subcarpathian areas returned to the Hungarian Holy Crown with Hungary* ordered the Prime Minister to "propose a separate act on the regulation of the local government of Carpathian Ruthenia to the national assembly".[49] On 22 June, the day the act was adopted, Government Decree No. 6200/1939 on *the temporary organisation of the public administration of the Subcarpathian areas returned to the Hungarian Holy Crown* was published.[50] Based on this decision, the *Subcarpathian Governing Commissariat* (after the border modifications: its territory was 12,146 km^2, its population 671,512 persons) with the capital Ungvár was established on 7 July 1939, which was governed by governors appointed by *Miklós Horthy* (1868–1957), Head of State. This position was first occupied by *Baron Zsigmond Perényi* (1870–1946), and

48 Thirring 1939, pp. 199–200, 236–237.
49 National Law Archive, 23 June 1939 (Issue 6). See also: MNL OL K 774–1939, pp. 55–57.
50 Domestic Gazette, 8 July 1939 (Issue 30) pp. 769–773.

then by *Miklós Kozma* (originally Lázár, 1884–1941) and *Vilmos Pál Tomcsányi* (1880–1959).

The territory under the jurisdiction of the Subcarpathian Governing Commissariat was divided into three units: Ung, Bereg and Máramaros Administrative Offices, with headquarters in Ungvár, Munkács and Huszt.[51] Their public and specialised administration differed completely from the governance of Ung County established after the First Vienna Award in the southern flatland region of Carpathian Ruthenia and that of Bereg and Ugocsa Counties which were temporarily united in terms of public administration. In the territory of the governing commissariat, bilingual – Hungarian and Ruthenian – official administration by the authorities (signs of printed materials, circular stamps, postal services, public institutions, public roads and railway stations, etc.) and free use of language were general. Furthermore, the Ruthenian language was taught from elementary schools to university level (available at the Budapest University), in addition to a wide range of opportunities for native-language public education. Bilingualism was served by the *Subcarpathian Scientific Society of Ungvár* founded on 26 January 1941 in Ungvár – Подкарпатское Общество Наук, Унгваръ, the "Rusyn Academy" – which brought together scientists, researchers and artists of Ruthenian origin, whilst also publishing Ruthenian books, journals and newspapers.[52]

Meanwhile, with objectives similar to those from four decades earlier, in July 1939 the Hungarian government relaunched the mountain-region campaign led by the martyr Egán, for the purpose of economic, educational and social advancement of the Rusyns. *Count Pál Teleki* (1879–1941), Prime Minister, proposed an act on the local government of Carpathian Ruthenia on 23 July 1940 in the Parliament, which he later withdrew on 5 August due to the very strained relations between Hungarians and Romanians. Supplemented by further legislation on administration, the above Government Decree No. 6200/1939 establishing Hungarian–Ruthenian bilingualism, however, remained

51 Benisch 1941, pp. 73–74.

52 Botlik 2005, pp. 352–360. – About the elements of Bilingualism and the Subcarpathian Scientific Society; Idem, 2005, pp. 9–58.

in effect until the Soviet military occupation of Carpathian Ruthenia at the end of October 1944. The communist dictatorship immediately did away with bilingualism and even ruined the results of the mountain-region campaign.

Pursuant to the Moscow Agreement signed on 29 June 1945 by the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, mountainous Carpathian Ruthenia together with the Ung, Beregi-Tiszahát and Ugocsa flatlands populated by Hungarians were permanently occupied by the Soviet Union,[53] *thereby changing its territory for the fifth time in twenty-five years.* Its size increased to 12,800 km^2 after the Soviet–Czechoslovak national border was defined. At the time, the approximately 60 km long and 10–15 km wide region west of the Ung river and north of Ungvár to the Uzsok Pass was incorporated into the Soviet empire up to the dividing line between the Podkarpatská Rus and Slovak provinces between 1919 and 1938. At the same time, the three villages (Kisrát, Nagyrát, Tiszaásvány) south of the above region in the Ung Plain, east of the Ungvár–Csap railway line, as well as 17 villages west of them,[54] were also annexed to the Soviet Union, although these municipalities belonged to Slovakia in terms of public administration between 1919 and 1938, and were governed from Bratislava. According to the 1941 census, 20 villages mainly populated by Hungarians were located in the Ung region detached and annexed to the Soviet Union. They had a total area of 17,938 hectares, i.e. 179,39 km^2 and a population of 14,888 persons, of which 13,998 were Hungarians (94.02%), 467 Ruthenians (3.13%), 20 Germans and 402 spoke other native languages (2.70%).[55]

53 Botlik & Dupka 1991, p. 53 – Wording and minutes of the Soviet–Czechoslovak Agreement on the annexation of Carpathian Ruthenia to the Soviet Union, pp. 148–150.

54 The 17 detached villages: Bátfa, Botfalva, Csap, Gálocs, Ketergény, [Kincses] Homok, Kisszelmenc, Kistéglás, Koncháza, Minaj, Ördarma, Palágykomoróc, Palló, Sislóc, Szürte, Tiszasalamon, Ungtarnóc (today: Batfa, Botfalva, Chop, Haloch, Rozivka, Kholmok, Mali Selmentsi, Tijglas, Koncovo, Mynai, Storozhnytsya, Palad' Komarivtsi, Pallo, Sislivci, Siurte, Solomonovo, Tarnivci, all in Ukraine). The most populous of them was the village of Csap on the Tisza river with 3,498 inhabitants, of which 3,416 were Hungarians (97.65%), 26 Ruthenians, 13 Germans and 43 classified as 'other'.

55 Statistický lexikon obcí v Podkarpatské Rusi 1928, pp. 26–27, 31; Statistický lexikon obcí na Slovensku. Štátný úrad statistický, V Praha 1927, pp. 128–131; Statistický lexikon obcí v zemi Podkarpatské. Nákladem "Orbis", V Praze 1937, pp. 22–23; Kepecs 1996, pp. 105–106, 112–115.

After the renewed separation of Carpathian Ruthenia from Hungary, from October 1944, the Hungarian translation of the very similar Russian and Ukrainian name of the region, *Kárpátontúl* [literally: Transcarpathia] was not adopted in the Hungarian language. There is reason to believe that it was a difference in approach, since the newly conquered "Soviet" territory, when looked at from Moscow or Kiev, was indeed "beyond" the Carpathians, whereas in Hungary it was "hither", that is, *Subcarpathia*. It follows that in the mother country the more appropriate *Carpatho-Ukraine* or *Carpathian Ukraine* spread instead of *Kárpátontúl*, while it was essentially the same as the *Carpatho-Ukraine* country part name arbitrarily introduced by Avgustyn Voloshyn, Prime Minister of Podkarpatská Rus, at the turn of 1938–1939.[56] Likewise, the *Carpathian Ukraine* expression was used by the communists at the turn of 1944–1945 in their requests and newspapers sent to Moscow and Ungvár, who applied for the annexation of South Máramaros to Carpathian Ukraine, and thus to Soviet Ukraine. The relevant decision was made on 27 January 1945 in Máramarossziget "at an extraordinary meeting unanimously with enthusiasm".[57]

The high command of the Soviet Union originally planned the line of the Tisza to be a Soviet–Hungarian national border, i.e. it aimed to annex the so-called Csonka-Bereg region (459 km^2). In a serious breach of the Armistice Agreement with Hungary signed on 20 January 1945 in Moscow,[58] with the knowledge of Marshal Ivan S. Konev (1897–1973), occupying Soviet troops stationed in the region and Subcarpathian Ukrainian armed forces launched an attack on the morning of 16 August to detach Csonka-Bereg, i.e. 25 villages

56 Avgustyn Voloshyn was arrested as a fascist leader by retaliatory Soviet troops, the SMERSH (СМЕРШ) in May 1945 in Prague. He was taken to Moscow, where he died in July in Butyrka prison on remand. Voloshyn, who was stigmatised for decades, and the "state" of Carpatho-Ukraine were rehabilitated by the independent Ukraine, recognising it as its historical antecedent and celebrating its anniversaries. Voloshyn was given the Order of State in 2002, and posthumously awarded the title of "Hero of Ukraine".

57 The National Democratic Front unanimously joined Soviet Ukraine. A Nép [literally: The People]. Democratic journal. Máramarossziget, 28 January 1945 (Issue 6) 1.

58 The Agreement ordered Hungary back beyond the frontiers of Trianon on 31 December 1937.

of the Vásárosnamény district. Their units arriving with trucks disarmed the Hungarian border guards and police in a surprise attack, cut off the telephone communications and occupied the line of the Tisza. Threatening to execute them, their commanders forced officials of the villages to apply for the annexation of their villages to *Carpatho-Ukraine* and the Soviet Union. In the meantime, their soldiers raided and caused substantial damages to the movable property, cereals and animals of inhabitants. In order to intimidate, the retaliatory troops of the NKVD and the SMERSH deported men aged 18 to 55 from this region as well – about two thousand people – to the detention camp in Szolyva and from there to gulags, where the majority died.

Dr István Balogh (1912–2007), lord-lieutenant [Hungarian: főispán] of Szatmár, Bereg and Ugocsa Counties temporarily united in terms of public administration, reported to *Ferenc Erdei* (1910–1971), Minister of the Interior in the Interim National Government, on the above circumstances of the illegitimate occupation of Csonka-Bereg between 16 and 28 August 1945 in his monthly report dated 13 September 1945 in Mátészalka.[59] Government leaders with Hungarian sentiments managed to convince the English and American members of the Allied Control Commission in Budapest (which had a Soviet majority) to countermand Soviet Ukrainian troops and their occupying administration bodies from the Csonka-Bereg villages. In the archives of the NKVD, 1944–1945 variants of the "Great Carpatho-Ukraine" maps can be found, on which the majority of the Ung region, Felső-Bodrogköz, Csonka-Bereg and Túrhát (the neighbourhood of Tiszabecs and the Halmi district) are already indicated as components of the Soviet empire.[60]

The above Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement was approved by the Czechoslovak national assembly on 23 November 1945, and then on 27 November by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The agreement

59 Monthly report by Lord-Lieutenant István Balogh, 13 September 1945. MNL Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Archives (Nyíregyháza), XXI. 101/C. Documents by the Lord-Lieutenant of Szatmár-Bereg County. Documents by public service government commissioner. (Settlement of public administration borders, official operations.) Ref. no.: 5002/eln., ad 40/1945. eln. no. 1–2.

60 Botlik 2019, pp. 63–73. Attached map: Planned borders of Great Subcarpathia.

only entered into force on 30 January 1946, when official documents were exchanged in Prague. Eight days earlier the above Presidium of the Supreme Soviet established *Zakarpattia Oblast* [literally: Transcarpathian region] with the administrative centre of Ungvár in Decree No. 218 dated 22 January 1946 in Moscow; in the original document with the Russian name Закарпатськая область (Zakarpats'ka oblasť). As cited: "It is to be approved that Zakarpattia Oblast be established with the administrative centre of Ungvár as proposed by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic."[61]

Two days later, on 24 January 1946, Decree No. 219 by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the UkSSR was published in Kiev, with the following text: "From 25 January 1946, the legislation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic shall be introduced in Zakarpattia Oblast" (in the original Ukrainian legislation: Закарпатська область, ('Zakarpatszka oblaszty'). The latter *ukase* (legislative decree) was required because *Transcarpathian Ukraine* (i.e. Subcarpathia; Закарпатська Україна, ЗУ; Zakarpatská Ukrajina, ZU) – which was dependant on the supreme leadership and national government of Moscow but locally independent – was essentially operating as an autonomous state and Soviet republic with the administrative centre of Ungvár. Its government, Народна Рада ('Narodna Rada'), i.e. National Council,[62] and various central authorities operated from their establishment on 27 November 1944 for more than a year (14 months) until 24 January 1946. Meanwhile, in Subcarpathia, the laws of the Soviet Union were in effect, meaning that it did not belong to the Ukrainian republic with the administrative centre of Kiev at all, although today's Ukrainian historiography tries to confirm this with no basis whatsoever.

The then autonomous state nature of Carpathian Ruthenia is also confirmed by the fact that one week before the establishment of the National Council, on 19 November 1944, the Communist Party of Zakarpattia Ukraine (CPZU) and its Central Committee (CC, 'Комуністична Партія Закарпатської України Центральний Комітет', abbreviated in Ukrainian as: КПЗУ ЦК) were

61 Bibikov & Kovács 1970, pp. 2–3, 28 – Oblast [region, its English equivalent is province].

62 In the contemporary Hungarian media 'Néptanács' [literally: People's Council] or 'Kárpátontúli Néptanács' [literally: Transcarpathian People's Council].

established in Munkács for the transfer of power.[63] The first secretary of the CPZU CC was *János Turjanica*, born in Bereg County (later: Ivan Ivanovich, 1901–1905).[64] According to the practice in the Soviet Union, the positions of the leader of the Communist Party and the president of the executive power, the national council (government), in Carpathian Ruthenia were also held by the same person, Ivan Turjanica. Shortly after Zakarpattia Oblast (i.e. Carpathian Ruthenia) was annexed on 25 January 1946 to Ukraine and transferred into the newest province of the state, its executive, public administration and services operations organs were eliminated. Its own postal services – Пошта Закарпатська Україна ('Posta Zakarpatská Ukrajina') – that were set up by the National Council on 3 January 1945 were also terminated.[65] The CPZU in Carpathian Ruthenia was incorporated into the Communist [Bolshevik] Party of Ukraine; Ivan Turjanica held the position of the first secretary of the Subcarpathian regional committee of the C(B)PU. The Ukrainian regime tried to introduce the *Transcarpathia* expression, which was officially successful, but it mainly also used *Carpatho-Ukraine* by necessity.

It is important to note that after the Soviet military occupation in October 1944, *Russian was introduced as an official language* in Carpathian Ruthenia. Following that, Ukrainian could only serve as a secondary language, even after Carpathian Ruthenia was annexed as an independent region (province) to Ukraine on 25 January 1946. This status was held in the Soviet era for more than four decades. It only changed on 16 July 1990 when the Supreme Council of Ukraine (Верховна Рада, 'Verkhovna Rada'), i.e. the Parliament, declared partial independence of the country based on national self-determination and

63 Komunisticna Partija Zakarpatskoji Ukrajini Centralynij Komitet, abbreviated: KPZU CK – In the contemporary local Hungarian Communist media: Central Committee of the Communist Party of Zakarpattia Ukraine, abbreviated: CPZU CC.

64 János Turjanica, a former 1919 Hungarian Red Army soldier, worked as a chimneysweep between 1921 and 1925 in Budapest.

65 The Transcarpathian Ukrainian Post overprinted the 103 types of stamps of the Hungarian Royal Post with Cyrillic script, including famous series (Saint Margaret, Kossuth, Horthy, Chain Bridge, Generals, etc.) that remained in circulation. The independent postal services later also issued new stamps with Cyrillic script. Simády 1991, pp. 122, 124, 130, 133–136, 143–147, 150–151.

declared Ukrainian to be the official language. Until then Russian was taught at Hungarian schools in Carpathian Ruthenia instead of Ukrainian.

In relation to the former, the official name of Carpathian Ruthenia occupied by the Soviet army in October 1944 was Закарпатськая область ('Zakarpatskaya oblasty') in Russian, and Закарпатська область ('Zakarpatska oblasty') in Ukrainian, meaning Zakarpattia Oblast, or 'Transcarpathian region'. In addition, the abbreviated form of the two concepts soon spread as already used in the Soviet Union, e.g. Закавказье (Zakavkaz'e), i.e. Transcaucasus, or Забайкалье (Zabajkal'e), Transbajkal. Following that, Carpathian Ruthenia was also called Закарпатье ('Zakarpatye') in Russian, and Закарпаття. ('Zakarpattya') in Ukrainian, and both were used to denote *Zakarpattia Oblast* in public life, in Russian and Ukrainian press and publications alike.[66] In Hungarian, it appeared in the Hungarianised form of *Zakarpatye*, then *Zakarpattya.*

In Hungary after the second World War, especially after 1948, the Communist regime spread the expressions *Carpathian Ukraine* and *Carpatho-Ukraine* in public opinion instead of *Subcarpathia*, and made them obligatory in official publications, while the press also advocated for them.

In addition, *Transcarpathia* and even the *Soviet Subcarpathia* concept were occasionally used. Primarily it was not the fate of Hungarians living there but the modestly evolving literary life that garnered press coverage in the motherland: in Ungvár one or two poetry anthologies and prosaic anthologies were published every year.[67] Meanwhile, the existence of Carpathian Ruthenia detached and annexed to the Soviet empire was regarded as a sensitive and even burning political issue in both the Rákosi and Kádár eras.

After the defeated 1956 revolution and fight for freedom, in 1959 the opening volume of the New Hungarian Lexicon was published after finishing its editing in 1958. In volume 4 – which was finally compiled on the first day

66 Personal communications by Sándor Kovács, teacher, author of Carpathian Ruthenian guidebooks, local historian, photographer (Budapest).

67 Tanuljunk a kárpátukrajnai kolhozparasztoktól. [Let's learn from Carpatho-Ukrainian kolkhoz farmers.] Mezőgazdasági Kiadó [Agricultural Publisher], Budapest, 1951, issue 46, Kulcsár 1959, Krecsmáry 1967, pp. 35–41.

of April 1961 – the *Subcarpathia* concept was only indicated as an entry word referencing the *Carpatho-Ukraine* article. Its name variants: *Transcarpathian region*, [in Russia: *Zakarpatskaja Ukraina*. Its territory: 12,900 km^2 (in most sources: 12,800 km^2), its population: 960,000 persons (1960), Ukrainians (75%), Hungarians (16%), i.e. 153,600 persons.[68]

The relevant article of the official publication of the New Hungarian Lexicon verified the *Carpatho-Ukraine* expression. In spite of that, the *Subcarpathia* concept already appeared at the end of the 1960s in the title of certain literary journals' articles, sometimes alternating with *Carpatho-Ukraine* even in issues of the same journal close to one another.[69] Not only the Hungarian literature in Carpathian Ruthenia, but also the minority fate of Hungarians living there was pointed out by two authors living there, *András S. Benedek* (1947–2009) and *Vilmos Kovács* (1927–1977), in their study published in late 1970 in Hungary. By describing the historical background and the current situation, they first tried to present the intellectual life of Subcarpathian Hungarians objectively.[70] Their paper was re-published after 12 years in an academic publication, but with the earlier politically charged title.[71] Besides Subcarpathia, the "Carpatho-Ukraine" concept was also used by the official historical chronology published in 1982.[72]

It is remarkable that the two authors still published the following as late as 1982 regarding the work entitled *Holnap is élünk* [in English: We'll still be alive tomorrow] by *Vilmos Kovács* published in 1965. "The book entered the public consciousness – citing Pál E. Fehér – as 'the novel of Carpathian Ukrainian Hungarians'."[73] While *Pál E. Fehér* (1936–2013), journalist, critic and deputy

68 Berei 1962, pp. 53, 54 – The history part of the article contains distorted data and even false facts.

69 Sándor 1969, pp. 126–128; Margócsy 1969, pp. 65–68; Margócsy 1970, pp. 89–90.

70 Kovács & Benedek 1970, pp. 961–966; Part II, issue 12. pp. 1144–1150. – Their writing caused a stir. Both authors were later reprimanded by Subcarpathian authorities and dismissed from their jobs. Benedek moved to Budapest in 1976 and Kovács in 1977, who died three weeks later from an incurable disease.

71 S. Benedek & Kovács 1982, pp. 159–174.

72 Benda 1982, pp. 1020, 1039, 1040, 1125, 1128.

73 S. Benedek & Kovács 1982, p. 166.

columnist of the cultural column in *Népszabadság*, the central party journal, described in the title of his review published in the literary weekly newspaper: "The novel of Subcarpathian Hungarians".[74] *Ferenc Kiss* (1928–1999), a contemporary literary historian born in Pijterfolvo in Carpathian Ruthenia, praised it a few weeks later in one of the best local journals as a "Carpatho-Ukrainian" work of art.[75]

From the turn of the 1960–1970s, Hungarian public opinion looked at the situation of the detached Hungarians living across the borders in minority with increasing attention and worry. Around this time, the *Kárpátalja* (Subcarpathia) expression stuck in the public consciousness, and the primarily politically charged Carpatho-Ukraine concept almost completely diminished from the turn of the 1980–1990s.

In the meantime, after 1945, the "triumphal progress" of the fairy tale of *Ivan Olbracht*, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, also continued. Mainly Hungarian folklorists and historians spread these misstatements over the past decades. At the forefront were authors *László Kósa* and *Antal Filep,* who published in 1975 in one of the greatest studies of the time: "The expression *Kárpátalja* (Subcarpathia) evolved when the territory was annexed to Czechoslovakia pursuant to the Treaty of Trianon, where it was governed as an independent public administration unit under the name *Podkarpatska Rus.* Following the second World War, it became part of Soviet-Ukraine as an independent administration unit under the name *Zakarpatskaja Oblasty*."[76] The article also mentions the name variant "Carpathukraine".

74 E. Fehér 1965, p. 4.

75 Kiss 1965, p. 896.

76 Kósa & Filep 1975, p. 127 – The correct name of the territory in Czech: Podkarpatská. In the same article, a gross mistake: "One group of the Hungarian tribes entered the Carpathian Basin in this region, through the valley of Ung (Verecke Pass)" (p. 125), As is known, the Hungarians arrived in the Carpathian Basin through the Verecke Pass near the valley of the Latorca (today: Latorica) river, and progressed towards Munkács. The book stated incorrectly that the Verecke Pass is situated by the source of the Ung. The reality is that from the Verecke Pass the source of the Ung and the Uzhok Pass are situated about 40 km far to the northwest of the Carpathian Mountains. [The volume by the two authors was revised by Iván Balassa (1917–2002).]

The highest-impact Hungarian propagator of the Olbracht type of legend was *Lajos Kiss*, linguist; the first publication of his etymological dictionary was published in 1978 for the fourth time after ten years. In the spirit of the times, the name description of Subcarpathian municipalities included in his work begins: "place in Carpatho-Ukraine (SU)", i.e. in the Soviet Union. However, in the "*Kárpátalja*" [Subcarpathia] article he cites the first paragraph of '*The nameless land*' by Ivan Olbracht, the Czech writer, from the volume re-published in 1956 in Czech[77] as a major source: "The Hungarian *Kárpátalja* emerged through a word-for-word translation based on the Czech *Podkarpatsko*, the Ukrainian Subcarpathia, Підкарпаття ('*Pidkarpattya*')."[78] Although Kiss stated the latter, he contradicted himself in his article, because he also mentioned the *Kárpát allyai* district from the Hübner Lexicon in 1817 and the weekly newspaper entitled *Kárpátalja* published in 1889 in Munkács.

The legend originating from Olbracht has further been praised by the Hungarian Ethnographic Lexicon educating generations of ethnographers. Its Kárpátalja article reiterates the gross mistake by the Czech writer, even adding another fault. As cited: "The expression *Kárpátalja* [Subcarpathia] evolved when the territory was annexed to Czechoslovakia pursuant to the Treaty of Trianon, where it was governed as an independent public administrative unit under the name *Podkarpatska Rus.* The Hungarian translation of this expression is Kárpátalja"[79] (correctly: Podkarpatská).

It follows from the above that even today the *Carpatho-Ukraine* expression – which for decades primarily made a political statement – can also be found in use by certain Hungarian authors.

Meanwhile, Hungarians in Carpathian Ruthenia found themselves within the framework of a new state, not without precedent, of course. At the extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of

77 Olbracht 1956, p. 63.

78 Kiss 1988, p. 693 –Lajos Kiss (1922–2003), senior staff of the Linguistic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1957–1996), academician and retired scientific advisor until his death. In some of his works he emphasised excessively the Slavic impact on the origin of Hungarian geographical names.

79 Ortutay 1980, p. 84.

the Soviet Union (CC of the CPSU) on 11 March 1985, *Mikhail S. Gorbachev* was elected as General Secretary, who then began to make radical changes to the empire. He declared the *policy of openness* and transparency, i.e. *'glasnost'* ('гласность'), of politics and information, i.e. publicity, which meant the lifting of the bans and restrictions so far. Another doctrine was *'perestroika'* ('перестройка'), i.e. *restructuring*, which was aimed at restructuring the economy and society. Thanks to these policies, the Ukrainian national movement gained strength, whose secession attempts were further facilitated by the Chernobyl disaster on 26 April 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant operating near the capital, Kiev.

In a milder political climate, on 26 February 1989, the first organisation protecting the interests of Hungarians living under national repression, the Cultural Alliance of Hungarians in Sub-Carpathia (CAHSC), was founded in Ungvár, with president *Sándor Fodó* (1940–2005), linguist and university teacher. At its general meeting held on 10 September in Munkács, the Organisation adopted a decision on the establishment of a *Hungarian Autonomous District* with the centre of Beregszász (today: Berehove, Ukraine). During these days, on 8–10 September, the most significant opposition mass organisation, the People's Movement of Ukraine for Reconstruction, the Rukh (РУХ), was founded in Kiev, which played a major role in holding multi-party elections in March 1990 in Ukraine. Following that, on 16 July, the Supreme Council of Ukraine (Parliament) adopted a declaration on the partial independence of Ukraine, and declared Ukrainian to be the official language of the country. One year later, on 24 August 1991, following the defeated coup attempt in Moscow, the Parliament in Kiev declared the full independence of Ukraine.

In the referendum on the first day of December 1991, citizens of the country approved the Supreme Council's decision on national independence, and *Leonid Kravchuk* was elected as President of the Republic. In Carpathian Ruthenia, at the same time, the opinion of voters was also asked in two additional matters. 78% of the voters voted for the establishment of a local government of the region (province) with a special status; while the vast majority, 81.4%, of the Beregszász region voted for the establishment of a Hungarian Autonomous

District.[80] The latter two initiatives have not been realised since then. The main reason for that is that five days later, on 6 December, *József Antall* (1931–1993), Prime Minister, signed the Hungarian–Ukrainian Treaty in Kiev, in which the interests of Subcarpathian Hungarians were completely disregarded. Ukraine implemented a patient minority policy against minorities making up about half of the country's population (mainly Russians, but also Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, etc.) until 1995–1996. At that time the situation changed, and since then Ukraine has built a nation state with outdated, currently unacceptable 19th-century instruments, focusing on suffocating national education and thus incorporating minorities into the majority Ukrainian people.

In the meantime, separated Hungarians living in Ukraine still avoid the politically-charged Transcarpathia expression and self-consciously use the *Subcarpathia* expression. The geographical extent of their homeland has not yet changed.

80 Botlik & Dupka 1993, p. 31.

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LÁSZLÓ GULYÁS

THE FIRST VIENNA AWARD, THE ENDGAME: WHAT HAPPENED ON 2 NOVEMBER 1938

1. Introduction

The First Vienna Award was reached as the end result of a diplomatic process which lasted several months. Even before the Munich Agreement, the leaders of Hungarian foreign policy had been seeking to satisfy their demands for revision concerning Upper Hungary with the help of international diplomacy. Hitler, however, prevented the Hungarian territorial demands from being put on the agenda of the Munich Conference. Thus the Hungarian (along with the Polish) issue only appeared in Annex No. 2 to the protocol recording the Munich Agreement, as follows: *"The Heads of the Governments of the four Powers declare that the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, shall form the subject of another meeting of the Heads of the Governments of the four Powers here present."*[1]

For Hungary, Annex No. 2 opened up the practical possibility of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon, which had been on the agenda for two decades, at least

1 The text of the agreement is cited by Francia Sárga könyv, n.d., p. 25.

with regard to Czechoslovakia. It recognised that the situation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia was an international issue, which – if it could not be solved via direct negotiations – would be settled by the parties to the Munich Agreement themselves.[2]

The direct Czech-Slovak-Hungarian negotiations – which took place in Komárom (today: Komárno, Slovakia) between 9 and 13 October 1938 – were not successful.[3] They were followed by a period of approximately 3 weeks during which the Hungarian and Slovak governments sought a solution involving international participation (primarily convening another four-power conference).[4] As the end result of these complicated British-French-Italian-German-Czechoslovak-Hungarian diplomatic games it became clear that there would not be another four-power conference, and instead the Hungarian demands concerning Upper Hungary would be settled by Italian-German arbitration.

On 30 October 1938, the German and the Italian governments officially announced that the arbitration would take place in Vienna on 2 November. This study presents the events that transpired on the day of 2 November.

2.1. Location and parties involved

The venue for the First Vienna Award was the Belvedere Palace, located in the diplomatic quarter of Vienna. The Baroque-style building was built between 1714 and 1724 by Eugene of Savoy, one of the successful military leaders of the so-called reoccupation wars against the Turks (1683–1699), and designed by Lucas von Hildebrant. The palace was meant to be a summer residence, but it was eventually only used by Savoy as a reception venue: its last resident was Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was assassinated in Sarajevo.

It might reasonably be asked: why did the German hosts choose this palace as the venue for the arbitration? We believe that it was a small act of diplomatic

2 Herczeg 1999, p. 253.
3 For more details on the course of the Komárom negotiations, see Gulyás 2016, pp. 133–143.
4 For more details, see Gulyás 2016, pp. 144–154.

consideration towards the Italians since – even though he served the Habsburg emperor as a German general – Eugene of Savoy was of Italian origin.

The main characters on 2 November were the members of the German, Italian, Czechoslovak and Hungarian delegations. The persons composing these delegations are listed in the following table:

German delegation	Joachim von Ribbentrop	German Foreign Minister
	Ernst Woermann	Deputy State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry
	Günther Altenburg	Czechoslovak rapporteur of the Political Division of the German Foreign Ministry
	Paul Schmidt	Interpreter of the German Foreign Ministry, extraordinary ambassador and authorised minister
	Eric Kordt	Head of the Cabinet Office of the German Foreign Ministry
Italian delegation	Galeazzo Ciano	Italian Foreign Minister
	Bernardo Attolico	Italian ambassador to Berlin
	Massimo Magisrati	Counsellor of the Italian Embassy in Berlin
Czechoslovak delegation	Frantisek Chvalkovský	Czechoslovak Foreign Minister
	Ivan Krno	Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister
Hungarian delegation	Kálmán Kánya	Hungarian Foreign Minister
	Pál Teleki	Minister of Religion and Education

It should be pointed out here that the Czechoslovak delegation was composed of the Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister of the government in Prague. This was despite the fact that some significant changes had occurred in the state law within the Czechoslovak State in autumn 1938, as both Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia had been granted autonomy[5] and a

5 For details, see Kovač 2001, pp. 201–202.

Slovak autonomous government led by Jozef Tiso and a Carpathian Ruthenian government led by Avgustyn Voloshyn had taken office accordingly. Tiso and Voloshyn were not official members of the delegation and could only be present at the Belvedere Palace as observers.

Concerning the Hungarian delegation, it should be noted that the reason why Pál Teleki was a member of the Hungarian delegation was not because he was the Minister of Religion and Education, but because as a geographer he had in-depth knowledge of the ethnographic conditions in Upper Hungary.

2.2. The morning conference

The morning session of the conference started at 12 p.m. It was opened by Ribbentrop who said that the Kingdom of Hungary and the Czechoslovak Republic had appealed to Germany and Italy with the request to demarcate the frontier between the two countries by arbitration. *"Our task today is to establish the final frontier between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on an ethnographic basis and to find a solution to the questions connected with this."*[6] He specifically noted that both the Hungarian and the Slovak parties accepted in advance the award to be made, meaning that the decision would be *"binding and final"*. He then invited the representatives of the Hungarian and the Czechoslovak Governments to describe briefly their respective positions. Before doing so, however, he gave the floor to Ciano, who greeted those present by saying a few sentences.

Thereafter, Kánya had the opportunity to explain the Hungarian position. In his short speech, the Hungarian Foreign Minister basically summarised the diplomatic events of the previous two months (September–October). The key point was that Hungary had been trying to settle the Hungarian-Czechoslovak relationship via negotiations in Komárom, pursuant to the Munich Agreement, but there were such significant differences of opinion on the territorial

6 The protocol of morning session is cited by Szarka 2017, Doc. 216, pp. 479–486.

questions that Hungary proposed arbitration. *"Hungary looks forward with a clean conscience to the arbitral award of the two powers and is convinced that the two Great Powers will give a just verdict, satisfactory to both parties,"*[7] he said at the end of his speech.

Thereafter, Teleki supplemented Kánya's speech by emphasising that the Hungarian territorial proposal was based on purely ethnographic principles. *"It is a simple matter to draw a frontier on the basis of these principles,"*[8] he said. He also noted, however, that at two points – in the case of Nyitra and Kassa (today: Nitra and Košice, Slovakia) – the application of the ethnographic principle causes difficulties. He specifically mentioned Pozsony (today: Bratislava, Slovakia), where none of the ethnic groups has an absolute majority (i.e. over 50%), although there was a relative Hungarian majority in Pozsony in 1910. In addition, Pozsony was once the capital city of Hungary during the Turkish regime. He finished his speech by saying that there were a few towns on the Slovak-Hungarian linguistic border *"which in 1918 were 80-90 percent Hungarian, but were later denationalised. Hungary therefore raised a claim to these towns on the grounds of both ancient and recent rights."*[9]

Thereafter, Chvalkovský, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, was granted speaking time, who – after a few sentences of diplomatic courtesy – gave the floor to Ambassador Krno, who presented the following line of reasoning in his speech: the Munich Agreement gave three months for Czechoslovakia to settle the question of the Hungarian and the Czechoslovak minority. The Czechoslovak Government endeavoured to honourably comply with this requirement. It took part in negotiations with Hungary as early as 9 October, 10 days after the Munich meeting. However, in the course of the negotiations in Komárom the Hungarian delegation submitted a proposal which Czechoslovakia could not accept. In response, the Hungarian party declared the Komárom negotiations closed. Following the failed negotiations, Czechoslovakia submitted a new proposal to Hungary on 22 October, but the Hungarians rejected that as well.

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.

After that, the Hungarian Government made a counter-proposal and requested arbitration or a plebiscite. *"Fully relying on the sense of justice of the German and Italian Governments, the Czechoslovak Government accepted this proposal."*[10] Krno continued his reasoning, however, by stating that the ethnic border between Slovakia and Hungary could not be drawn based on the data of the 1910 census in Hungary. He used Kassa as a specific example, as follows: *"In 1910, for example, Košice had a small Hungarian majority, but in 1880 the town was predominantly Slovak. Therefore, Teleki's assertion that Hungary demands these towns based on ancient and recent rights is not totally correct, because if one ignores the last thirty years, the Slovak side can demand with equal justice that the 1880 figures should be taken into consideration* [...]"[11]

Krno's arguments were responded to by Kánya and then Teleki. The Hungarian Minister of Culture explained that in the case of Nyitra and Kassa the changes that had occurred in the course of time needed to be taken into account. *"The grandfathers of most of the residents who are now identified as Slovak were Hungarian,"* he said.

In the unfolding debate, Chvalkovský asked that Tiso, the Slovak Prime Minister, and Voloshyn, the "Ukrainian" Prime Minister [meaning Carpathian Ruthenian - L.G.] be heard. Ribbentrop refused to comply with this request and called the two politicians mentioned "experts". He was only willing to promise to conduct an informal discussion with Tiso and Voloshyn during the official lunch. In his counter-response, Chvalkovský requested that the two politicians not be called experts in the protocol. Ribbentrop and Ciano expressed their agreement. This is how the morning session of the arbitration ended at around 2 p.m.

Thereafter, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. the delegates participated in a brunch, where they had the opportunity to have informal conversations. One such conversation took place between Ciano and Teleki, while Voloshyn and Tiso attempted to convince Ribbentrop about where they thought the Hungarian-Slovak border should lie.

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.

2.3. Demarcating the frontier

At around 4:30 p.m. the two arbitrators – Ribbentrop and Ciano – retreated into a separate room with their colleagues, where they established the final frontier. Paul Schmidt, interpreter of the German Foreign Ministry, recounted this event in his memoirs as follows: *"In a smaller room* [...] *the map of the disputed territories was spread in the centre of a large round table. Ribbentrop, Ciano and their colleagues were standing around the table. The two foreign ministers were each holding a thick pencil in their hands, and while they were talking, they were correcting the new boundary lines indicated by the experts, on which the arbitration award would be founded."*[12]

It is clear from the above quote that the line-drawing in Vienna was nothing more than the endgame; the foreign ministers just made "slight corrections" to the frontier. The Hungarian party had had an opportunity after 13 October 1938 – when the negotiations in Komárom broke down – to present its territorial demands in both Berlin and Rome within the framework of bilateral negotiations. Kálmán Darányi had negotiated on the Hungarian-Slovak frontier with Ribbentrop in Berlin on 14 and 15 October, while István Csík – head of cabinet of the Foreign Ministry – travelled to Rome, where he negotiated with Mussolini and Ciano.

Furthermore, on 29 October, Ciano – keeping it a secret from the Germans – asked Kánya to send to him a Hungarian team of experts to prepare him for the Vienna negotiations.[13] *"In this duel I would like to be the thorough German and I would like Ribbentrop to be the superficial Italian,"* said Ciano.[14]

The team, consisting of two experts (András Rónai and Béla Kardos, both colleagues at Teleki's Institute of Political Science) and one Foreign Ministry officer (Elemér Újpétery), arrived in Rome on 30 October, after an adventurous

12 Schmidt 1971, p. 208.
13 Juhász 1962, Doc. 607. p. 872.
14 Rónai 1989, p. 158.

flight.[15] There – in the course of a discussion lasting several hours – the Hungarian experts prepared the Italian Foreign Minister and his secretary Cesaro in relation to the characteristics of the Hungarian-Slovak linguistic border and the associated questions. As Rónai recalled, the Italians asked the following questions: *"Where is there a significant contrast between the statistics of the two countries? What may the controversial points be and what arguments can be listed by one party and the other? Which are the sorest spots for one party and the other?"*[16]

According to Rónai, the preparation produced the following results: *"Ciano became an excellent expert in the Hungarian-Slovak linguistic border, the geography and the public conditions in Hungary and Upper Hungary; he outperformed not only his German colleague, but also his experts. He recited dates and data by heart, he knew their Hungarian and Czech sources, and he was familiar with the line of the political and the linguistic border to such an extent that he was able to draw the most disputed territories by heart."*[17]

Returning to the room at the Belvedere Palace where the two Foreign Ministers were drawing the boundary lines, Schmidt, who was present, recorded the following scene: *"If you continue to defend the Czechs' interests so much you will get a medal of honour from Hacha, said Ciano to Ribbentrop with an evil smile on his face, and changed the boundaries using thick lines in favour of Hungary. Ribbentrop – while the specialist rapporteur of the Foreign Ministry whispered something into his ear – objected by saying: 'This is definitely an exaggeration' – and drew new lines at certain spots."*

We think that the scene described above well supports the opinion we formed while reading the October diplomacy reports, which is that during the period between the failure of the Komárom negotiations and the announcement of the First Vienna Award Hitler and Ribbentrop were supporting the Slovaks against the Hungarians. It was actually Italy that advocated on behalf of the Hungarian

15 For more details on the journey, see Gulyás 2012, pp. 22–31.

16 For more details on the preparation of Ciano and his secretary, see Rónai 1989, pp. 161–163.

17 Rónai 1989, pp. 161–163.

demands. Moreover, there are recollections suggesting that Ribbentrop made one last attempt at the Belvedere Palace to award Munkács to the Czechoslovak State during the arbitration, but finally accepted the Italian position.[18] For all of these reasons, we think that Ciano played a significant role in ensuring that the First Vienna Award established a fair border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

According to Schmidt, the establishment of the new Hungarian-Slovak frontier ended as follows: *"The two Foreign Ministers continued to quarrel for a while, erratically erasing and drawing, until the pencils wore out more and more and the boundary lines became thicker and thicker."*[19]

When writing about the thick lines and the thick green pencils drawing them, Macartney argues in his book that this was one of the pro-Hungarian tricks of Ciano. The Italian Foreign Minister deliberately used a thick pencil to draw the line, then he insisted that the upper edge of the line should be the Slovak-Hungarian border.[20]

In reality, the thick line drawn on the map meant a 750-meter-wide strip of land; moreover, not every village was shown on the map. These two circumstances provided an opportunity for a couple of villages to be attached to Hungary upon the physical establishment of the boundary line.[21]

2.4. The afternoon conference: announcement of the decision

The afternoon conference was opened by Ribbentrop at 7:10 p.m., who announced: *"The German and Italian Governments have completed the task of arbitrating in the question of the cession of Czechoslovak territory to Hungary.*

18 Szegedy-Maszák 1996, Vol I, p. 227.
19 Schmidt 1971, p. 208.
20 Macartney 2006, p. 392.
21 For more details, see Rónai 1989, pp. 187–192.

The task of the arbitrators was extremely difficult. But based on the ethnographic principle, a decision has been reached which, if correctly carried out, will bring a lasting and just solution to the questions outstanding between Hungary and Czechoslovakia."[22]

Thereafter, Ciano spoke, emphasising that in making the decision they had made efforts to *"find a lasting and just solution of the problem, designed to introduce a new era and lay the foundations for friendly and good neighbourly relations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia."*[23]

This was followed by the reading of the arbitral award consisting of 7 sections[24] and the accompanying[25] protocol. Upon the reading of the arbitral award, an enlarged version of a map of a scale of 1:750,000 – on which the boundary line was drawn with thick green lines – was displayed.

The accompanying protocol contained the precise description of the new border. The line precisely followed the Hungarian-Slovak ethnic border and only left a few Hungarian villages near Pozsony to Slovakia, in order to ensure some background area for the capital of the Slovak autonomous province. In the area of Nyitra – where the Hungarian and Slovak villages were mixed in a way that in the north Hungarian villages were embedded in Slovak linguistic areas and in the south Slovak villages were embedded in Hungarian ones – the region was cut in half by the arbitrators. The line used in the region of Nyitra was the so-called Ciano line. This line was actually created when András Rónai went to Rome to prepare Ciano. Elemér Újpétery writes about this in his memoirs as follows: *"*[…] *This confusing border cannot be justified either economically or administratively anyway.* [said Ciano - L.G.] *He continued to smile: "This is my proposal" – then he drew a straight line forcefully in our favour (later we called it the Ciano line).*[26]

Now back to the announcement of the decision. Let us listen to the recollections of Elemér Újpétery, an eyewitness to the events: *"Everyone was*

22 Ránki et. al. 1968, Doc. 155. p. 317.
23 Ibid.
24 The arbitration judgment in Hungarian is cited by Ránki et. al. 1968, Doc. 156. p. 318.
25 The accompanying protocol in Hungarian is cited by Ránki et. al. 1968, Doc. 157. p. 319.
26 Újpétery 1974, p. 81.

looking at the enlarged map with interest. It was not a surprise, at most for the Slovaks, who did not know about the Ciano line. As there was no right to appeal, both parties remained silent."[27]

All we can add to this is that, according to Aladár Szegedy-Maszák, another person recounting the events, when the decision was announced, Voloshyn was so shocked by the fact that Ungvár and Munkács were attached to Hungary that he fainted.[28] To the members of the Slovak delegation, Tiso said the following: *"We lost everything. Komárno, Újvár, Losonc, Léva, Rozsnyó and even Kassa..."* (today: Komárno, Nové Zámky, Lučenec, Levice, Rožňava, Košice, all in Slovakia).[29]

The Hungarian and the Slovak delegation received one copy, respectively, of the map showing the frontier. Teleki accepted the map of the Hungarian delegation wordlessly. In his book Ferenc Fodor, Teleki's biographer, attributed his silence to the fact that he was distressed because the Hungarian State was not able to reclaim Nyitra and Pozsony. This is well illustrated by the fact – as explained by Fodor in his book – that when the Hungarian delegation returning from Vienna was greeted by a huge crowd at Hegyeshalom and Győr, Teleki curtained the window of his compartment, and thus only Kánya and Csáky received the greetings.[30]

3. Evaluation of the First Vienna Award

At 11 p.m. on 2 November, Tiso made a speech on Pozsony radio, in which he evaluated the boundary line as follows: *"The German-Italian arbitration did not decide on the basis of the ethnic situation. There is nothing to do, just to bow our heads and work. But nobody can prevent us from announcing before the whole world that the Slovak nation has suffered a tragic insult."*[31]

27 Újpétery 1974, p. 83.
28 Szegedy-Maszák 1996, p. 228.
29 Deák 2002, p. 34.
30 Fodor 2001, p. 154.
31 Deák 2002, p. 35.

The following day the Slovak press assessed the decision as a *"cruel wound inflicted by Vienna"*.[32] Typical Slovak press coverage ran along these lines: *"The unfavourable decision of Germany and Italy in Vienna deprived Slovakia of a large portion of land and a great percentage of Slovak population. It's unlikely that the wounds will ever heal. The Vienna Award will burn on our nation's body as a permanent scar."*[33]

In summary, it can be said that the autonomous Slovak government (the leaders of the Slovak Republic from March 1939) and public opinion firmly rejected the First Vienna Award from the outset. As a result, tensions in the Slovak-Hungarian relationship escalated after 2 November.

Naturally, the Hungarian side was in a state of euphoria. On the day when the decision was announced – i.e. on 2 November – Hungarian Prime Minister Béla Imrédy made a short speech on the radio. In that speech, he praised the success of the Hungarian diplomatic efforts and expressed his thanks to Germany, Italy and Poland for supporting the Hungarian objectives. After the end of the speech, a celebrating crowd gathered in the streets of Budapest, which primarily concentrated in front of the Italian, German and Polish embassies.

In the course of following days the papers were filled with enthusiastic articles. The radio, newsreels and propaganda films all celebrated the First Vienna Award in a similar tone.

The Hungarian army started to occupy the territory on 4 November and finished the transfer on 11 November. Evacuation and occupation of the territory took place without any serious military confrontation. Regent Miklós Horthy participated – on his white horse – in the transfer in person: he led the Hungarian troops across the Komárom Bridge on 6 November and he marched into Kassa at the head of the soldiers on 11 November.[34] He describes this event in his memoirs as follows: *"Everyone who – like me – saw the touching and instinctive outbreaks of joy in both cities, and saw people fall into each other's arms or fall down on their knees along the road, and cry for*

32 For more details on the topic, see Oleknik 2010, pp. 99–110.
33 Gabzdilová 2010, pp. 59–70.
34 Bencsik 2001, p. 200.

joy, understood that a real liberation was taking place – and moreover without war and bloodshed."[35]

On 13 November 1938, Act No. XXXIV of 1938 on the reunification of the territories of Upper Hungary returned to Hungary – proposed by Béla Imrédy and Kálmán Kánya – was promulgated. János Esterházy – who had been the main leader of the Hungarian minority in Upper Hungary for many years – announced that he would stay in Slovakia to represent the Hungarian minority remaining under the jurisdiction of the autonomous Slovak State.[36]

The First Vienna Award

Legend: 1. National borders demarcated in 1920; 2. Provincial border of Carpathian Ruthenia; 3. Territories with Hungarian majority; 4. Border defined in judgment of Vienna Award. Source: Author's compilation. Cseh-Morvaország = Bohemia and Moravia; Lengyelország = Poland; Németország = Germany; Magyarország = Hungary; Szlovákia = Slovakia; Románia = Romania; Kárpátalja = Carpathian Ruthenia; Bécs = Vienna; Pozsony = Bratislava; Nagyszombat = Trnava; Nyitra = Nitra; Trencsén = Trenčín; Zsolna = Žilina; Zólyom = Zvolen; Rózsahegy = Ružomberok; Rimaszombat = Rimavská Sobota; Losonc = Lučenec; Jolsva = Jelšava; Rozsnyó = Rožňava; Lőcse = Levoča; Eperjes = Prešov; Kassa = Košice; Tőketerebes = Trebišov; Ungvár = Uzhgorod (Ужгород); Munkács = Mukachevo

35 Horthy 1990, p. 221.
36 Molnár 2010, pp. 113–114.

(Мукачево); Huszt = Khust (Хуст); Komárom = Komárno; Máramarossziget = Sighetu Marmației; Szatmárnémeti = Satu Mare

Turning to the numbers, Hungary received an area of 12,109 km^2 from the territory attached to Czechoslovakia in 1920. The population of the reattached territory was 869,000, of which 752,000 people (86.5%) were Hungarian.[37] With the Vienna Award, 117,000 non-Hungarians (Slovak, Ruthenian, German) were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Hungarian State, while 320,000 Hungarians still remained on the other side of the Hungarian-Slovak border, that is, in Slovakia.[38] The Hungarians who remained under the jurisdiction of the Slovak State continued to live their lives in an expressly hostile atmosphere.[39]

It should be pointed out here that the Hungarian academic literature discussing the Vienna Award uses two different pieces of data concerning the size of reattached population. Some of the academic writers talk about 869,000 people based on Rónai's data set, while others specify 1,040,000 people (of which 879,000 were Hungarians).[40] This difference arises from the fact that Rónai calculated the number of residents returning to Hungary based on the 1930 Czechoslovak census, while the other group of historians calculated those returning relying on the 1941 census in Hungary.

László Vizi points out in his book that the First Vienna Award was not achieved as a result of a Slovak-Hungarian compromise, but reflected the will of Germany and Italy, and was not accompanied by the guarantee of France and Great Britain. This made the results of the decision doubtful in the long term.[41]

We agree with Attila Simon, who thinks that the First Vienna Award is one of the main events that has traumatised Slovak-Hungarian relations up to this day.[42] The decision not only divides public opinion, but also Slovak and Hungarian historiography. Slovak historiography considers the decision as an

37 Rónai 1989, p. 177.
38 Ibid.
39 For more details, see Kovács 1993, pp. 127–155 and Kamanec n.d., pp. 39–47.
40 See Vizi 2016, p. 81.
41 Vizi 2016, p. 80.
42 Simon 2010, pp. 71–83.

offense which resulted in the return of Hungarian oppression. This approach is typically represented by Ladislav Deák and his work.[43]

During the socialist era (1945–1990), Hungarian historiography tried to conceal the significance of the Vienna Award. In the period after 1990 one important piece of work was published on the Vienna Award: the detailed, thorough and excellent book of Gergely Sallai in 2002. Nowadays, Hungarian historiography assesses the Vienna Award in two ways: one of the trends considers it as historical justice, while the other school tries to relativise it in the spirit of some sort of pseudo-objectivity. The operation of the trend trying to conceal the importance of the First Vienna Award is well illustrated by the book of László Szarka on the history of the Czechoslovak State, published in 2016,[44] in which the Komárom negotiations are discussed in a mere two short paragraphs,[45] while the content of the Vienna Award is practically ignored in the text.

The author of this study believes that the First Vienna Award was the exact and objective implementation of the demarcation of the border on an ethnographic basis. Furthermore, it can be stated that the Slovak-Hungarian frontier of the First Vienna Award was much fairer in every respect – but particularly in terms of the application of the ethnographic principle – than the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border demarcated by Trianon. The First Vienna Award drew a fair border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

43 See one of his typical studies: Deák 1988.
44 Szarka 2016.
45 Szarka 2016, bottom of page 219 and top of page 220.

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PÉTER ILLIK

EVALUATION OF THE HORTHY ERA IN HUNGARIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY TEXTBOOKS (1945–2005)[1]

Introduction

Hungarian secondary education is a constant focus of public attention, and there are several reasons for this. On the one hand, different and often conflicting interests of all parts of society – teachers, students, parents of different occupations – converge in this field. That is, public education is deeply embedded in society. On the other hand, all actors in society have been or are currently involved in education in some way, and thus everyone feels as if they were experts in their own point of view.

Even today, one of the basic elements of education is the coursebook, which – unlike a lesson – can be measured and judged relatively objectively, considering that *verba volant, scripta manent* [speech is ephemeral, writing

1 This paper was prepared by correcting, transforming and shortening a text that had already been published twice. Previous publications: Illik 2017 and 2019. In this study, I have omitted the footnotes on the historiography of textbook research for reasons of brevity, as they were included in two previous texts.

remains]. This is exactly why coursebooks are the focus of this paper. They can be assessed on the basis of various, complex pedagogical criteria. However, there are also examples of comparative and thematic coursebook analyses, with the latter meaning that a topic is analysed in one or more publications. This study examines how the Horthy era (the period from the entry of Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya into Budapest until the appointment of Ferenc Szálasi) is presented and evaluated in post-1945 Hungarian secondary school coursebooks up to 2005.[2] The coursebooks are analysed in chronological order, but specific topics already discussed in different articles are not covered in this study.

Obviously, there are several turning points for post-1945 coursebooks. Firstly, the transition in 1989, considering that the change of attitude about the Horthy era began in the 1980s. "Horthy's counter-revolutionary regime" was necessarily denigrated in the obviously politicised coursebooks of the socialist era. After the change in the political system, this did not shift in the opposite direction, i.e. towards a clearly positive assessment. Methodologically, instead of politicised coursebooks, those without a clear opinion became common, where value judgment can only be read between the lines: from source texts, images, questions included, and the available facts selected in the main text, i.e. which ones are used and which are not when describing the era. So what does the coursebook suggest?

The two-level final examination in the subject of history introduced in 2005 constitutes another significant turning point for this study. Organising entrance exams is no longer the responsibility of the universities, and additionally the intermediate and advanced level final examinations were separated, where, unlike before, the written test also became a part of the exams. At the intermediate level, the scores were up to 90 points in the written test and 60 points in the oral part. (With the latest changes, this was modified up to 100 points and 50 points in 2016.) There are essay questions in the written

2 I did not examine the educational-political environment of textbooks, i.e. the education laws or other circumstances of the Kádár era, which influenced the textbooks written up to 1989, as this was undertaken by Albert (2004). In addition, the book Képek és arcképek presents an overview of the history textbooks of the Kádár era.

examination, both at the intermediate and advanced levels, where students are expected to write problem-oriented, source-analysing, explanatory texts (i.e. answering the question "*why?*"). It is very important that the explanation here means that a statement should be made for each response element, which should not "hang in the air", i.e. it should be accompanied by an explanation or a conclusion drawn from it (with the changes that came into effect in the summer of 2016, the final examinations also includes a complex cross-period source analysis and an essay writing task). Thus, by analysing the coursebooks, this paper also raises the question of the extent to which the author considers these coursebooks to be suitable for final examinations, including the preparation for writing essays, and of the extent to which the main text of these books enters into explanations.[3] Set as a basic requirement, the coursebook alone should be suitable for this without the teacher's explanations. This methodological question is strongly justified because the Horthy era is one of the periods which gives rise to the most concerns and varied interpretations in Hungarian history and, moreover, it is still relevant today as it is linked closely to political thought and public opinion, and thus triggers intense emotional reactions. Furthermore, this issue is still very much a part of everyday political and ideological currents.

Based on the historical literature and the final examination topics, what are the problem areas, questions, evaluations I had anticipated, or at least expected and could expect to be raised in connection with the Horthy era? (1) Who was Miklós Horthy and how did he become the Regent of Hungary? (2) What was the White Terror, how can it be assessed, to what extent was it related to Horthy or the government? (3) What exactly does a "kingdom without a king" mean, what kind of form of government is it (dictatorial, democratic or other) and how unique is it in the world? (4) Why did anti-Semitism exist in the era, what were its origins and characteristics, and later, how did Horthy, the politics and society relate to this and the Holocaust? (5) How successful was the Bethlen Consolidation? (6) How can revision be evaluated, what role did it play in the

3 This is obviously a reasonable criterion for textbooks published after 2005. However, an analysis of earlier textbooks is also indispensable, as they form an "integral part" of the current ones.

process of drifting into the war, how can the behaviour of Hungarian troops be evaluated during the annexation? (7) Why did Hungary "drift" towards German politics from the second half of the 1930s, what pressures and coercions did it face? (8) How did Pál Teleki die? (9) Who bombed Kassa (today: Košice, Slovakia) and to what extent was it just used as a pretext to enter the war? (10) How can Hungary's participation in the war be assessed, and how significant was the catastrophe at the Don River? (11) Why did the attempt to withdraw Hungary from the war fail? To what extent is Miklós Horthy responsible for this and for Szálasi's appointment?

There are many questions that cannot necessarily be answered, but can be raised, considered, explained and evaluated. These issues are, of course, addressed in the literature, and thus it is also possible to receive an implicit answer to the question of the extent to which academic knowledge and various professional debates flow into the coursebooks.

Evaluation of the Horthy era from 1945 to the 1980s

In line with earlier traditions, Kosáry's coursebook[4] is actually a book rather than a coursebook: it is small in shape and does not contain illustrative figures, maps or charts.

As early as 1945, using socialist terminology in terms of content, he spoke of reaction and class domination, thus laying the foundations for later phraseology. However, the book contains only 10 pages on the Horthy period. He derives the anti-Semitism prevailing in the Horthy era and, according to the coursebook, the completely unrealised agrarian reform from dualism.[5] He defines the counter-revolutionary character of the era as being against everything in which he saw the causes of the revolutions and collapse. These were mainly liberalism

4 Kosáry & Mérei 1945.
5 Idem, pp. 162–163.

and internationalism, according to the book. The counter-revolutionary system *"Dropped the hated liberal robe and put on the Christian tunic. Christianity, however, did not mean the realisation of social* [...] *papal encyclicals, but merely anti-Semitism. Internationalism* [...] *was replaced by national ideology, which, however, followed on from patriotism symbolised by the uniforms with Hungarian soutache at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. After the revolution, this patriotism ended in revisionism and irredentism* [...] *instead of a spirit of agreement and peaceful cooperation. Because of its social approach, this thinking was anti-democratic and hated reforms. Typically, the idea of independence persisted even after the disintegration of the Compromise. But now in an anti-Habsburg form, mixed with racist, Turanist elements."*[6] After this introduction, however, the main text gives a fairly concise, objective and factual description of the establishment of the counter-revolutionary system (the term White Terror is still used in parentheses), domestic politics, foreign policy relations, and socio-economic life. Interestingly, the text praises the exit attempt: *"The ruling class opposition of the Germans made another attempt to pull the nation back from the edge of the vortex and protect it from another tragedy."*[7] In this book, the topic (i.e. the Horthy era) starts with a brief introduction with completely socialist phraseology, followed by a relatively neutral list of facts. Basically, this has become common, without the socialist introduction, in post-1989 secondary school coursebooks too, which list historical facts rather than giving explanations of problems.

Varga's coursebook[8] summarises the history of the Horthy era slightly longer, in a main text of thirteen pages. There is no socialist terminology, such as class struggle, but the following sentence sets the tone for processing the topic: *"The* [Trianon] *peace treaty could have been one of the greatest turning points in Hungarian history if leaders had drawn the appropriate political and social consequences."*[9] It seems obvious that the key to interpreting this sentence

6 Idem, pp. 163–164.
7 Idem, p. 170.
8 Varga 1946. (Another textbook discussing the Horthy era in a similar spirit, but even shorter than this book, namely in about 5 pages: Iván 1947.)
9 Idem, p. 212.

could have been the favourable interpretation of the "turning point"; that is, the correct processing of the Treaty of Trianon could (also) have had promising consequences, according to the coursebook writer. After that, the Horthy era and its revisionism can only be a negative element in this book.[10] In the same spirit, domestic politics is also referred to only as a *"watchword reform policy"*[11], and its "[…] *major deficiency was that it lacked serious, but constructive radicalism;* [perhaps this is the only text in a coursebook that does not confuse radicalism with extremism – P.I.] *instead, it merely emphasised pretentious, powerful slogans."*[12] This book makes rather original criticisms of the Horthy regime: its biggest mistake was not to introduce real reforms and not to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the situation. It can obviously be argued whether there were any such opportunities at all, but in any case it does not take a negative approach to the trauma of Trianon and its ramifications.

The books by Lukács[13] already show fully developed socialist assessments. They contain a complete, whole and coherent thematic unit on the Horthy era under the heading *Counter-revolution and Fascism.* Moreover, a fully developed socialist ideology appears in the phraseology and interpretation of the text. However, looking behind this phraseology, it is worth mentioning the elements that survived in post-1989 coursebooks (as will be seen in the later analyses).

The first idea already sets the tone: *"After the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, sad days dawned on our people. It was the beginning of an oppressive, radically reactionary era of counter-revolution. With the help of the Entente imperialists, the counter-revolution restored the rule of the capitalist and landowner classes in Hungary. The working people were handcuffed."*[14] This is also a good indication of the West being guiltier, as the West is the "employer", the principal, but the Horthy era is also culpable. This order is important because while both are responsible, the text even partly exonerates the elite of the Horthy regime to blame the Western imperialists and later the German Nazis.

10 Idem, p. 222.
11 Idem, p. 216.
12 Ibid.
13 Lukács 1954; Lukács 1950. I analyse this book below; the other one is a later version of it.
14 Idem, p. 127.

This is followed by a digression on the merits of the Hungarian Communists, who fought against the regime and *"taught our people to love the Soviet Union"*.[15] Only thereafter does the text discuss the White Terror and point out that the Horthysts betrayed war plans to the Romanians (however this was not the truth),[16] and the Social Democrats (e.g. Károly Peyer) also betrayed the Communists.[17] In this approach, the signing of the Treaty of Trianon was also in the interests of the counter-revolutionary regime.[18] The presentation of the Communist Party as a topic was significantly reduced in post-1989 coursebooks, and a different understanding of the Trianon peace treaty was obviously adopted, but the White Terror remained a well-presented topic in secondary school coursebooks even after the transition.

According to this interpretation, the Bethlen Consolidation followed from the reactionary traditions of the Monarchy and aimed to preserve the power of the ruling classes and oppress the workers. Thus, the Bethlen-Peyer Pact is also a betrayal of the Social Democrats,[19] and the implementation of the Nagyatádi agrarian reform could only have been aimed at conserving the old large holdings and creating a "new aristocracy".[20] The section on domestic political consolidation is supplemented with a parallel lesson, which presents the activities of the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP), then the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) and Mátyás Rákosi in the same period.[21] This is followed by a brief description of the foreign policy of the Bethlen era, wherein the book already shows the root of the process of becoming German allies.[22] Interestingly, only in relation to anti-Semitism (if at all) did the post-1989 coursebooks emphasise that in many respects the Horthy regime carried on the traditions of the Monarchy. Although the Bethlen-Peyer Pact is

15 Idem, p. 128.
16 Idem, p. 129.
17 Idem, p. 130.
18 Idem, p. 133.
19 Idem, p. 135.
20 Idem, pp. 136–137.
21 Idem, pp. 142–147.
22 Idem, p. 148.

mentioned in the coursebooks under this name, none of them indicated that although it was meant to be kept secret, it had "leaked" two years later, so it was fully known at that time. From the 1960s to 1989, the presentation of the Communists and their party remained predominant on a thematic level, but the person of Mátyás Rákosi was naturally excluded from the material. And after the transition, the whole topic was relegated to the background.

As a failure of Western imperialism, the text compares the Great Depression with the success of the Soviet Union and the socialist economy[23] and highlights the struggles of the workers as domestic consequences.[24] This area has been paraphrased in modern coursebooks: besides economic restrictions, strikes and demonstrations are also included.

Lukács sees the 1930s as an advance of fascism and, in a peculiar way, exonerates to some extent the domestic political elite, as he acknowledges and emphasises the Nazi economic-political pressure on them,[25] while many of the post-1989 secondary school coursebooks do not do so!

The main reason for drifting into the Second World War is, paradoxically, Teleki, who committed a political crime even with his suicide: *"Under the Teleki government, Hungary became even more complicit in fascist Germany* [...] *Count Pál Teleki, who had been a strong supporter of the counter-revolutionary regime throughout and a faithful servant of fascist Germany, shot himself in April 1941. With his suicide, he stepped aside and thus paved the way further for a sinful policy to which he had thoroughly contributed."*[26] This is again followed by a description of communist resistance and Rákosi's activities.[27] Hungary's entry into the war clearly comes as a result of the aggression of Horthy and the ruling classes, who did not accept the Moscow peace offering in 1941 and co-organised the bombing of Kassa with the Germans,[28] Kállay's "swing policy" failed and the Hungarian

23 Ibid.
24 Idem, p. 151.
25 Idem, pp. 152–153.
26 Idem, pp. 158–159.
27 Idem, pp. 159–162.
28 Idem, p. 165.

Second Army was annihilated at the catastrophe at the Don.[29] Perhaps the conceptual legacy of these lessons, however, is that the bombing of Kassa or the death of Teleki remained unquestioned in later coursebooks. And the catastrophe at the Don is also interpreted as a complete disaster. However, more recent coursebooks simply deleted the theory of the German bombing of Kassa, as well as the idea that Teleki was a servant of the fascists, but did not replace them with any other particular interpretation. Furthermore, recent research results on the defeat at the Don have not basically been included to this day.

In 1944, *"Ultimately, in order to prevent Hungary from possibly withdrawing from the war, fascist Germany formally occupied the country on March 19, 1944.* [...] *Horthy, the Kállay-led government and the fascist senior officers, did not even try to resist, and they slavishly accepted the situation."*[30] The text blames Horthy for the Arrow Cross takeover, but not for the failed exit attempt in October: *"Horthy and his followers themselves educated and fed the fascist scum for years. Even if there were some conflicts between them, their interests coincided to a much higher degree."*[31] This approach has also continued since Horthy and political decision-makers still appear as a central issue in modern secondary school coursebooks, in relation to what their sympathies were or who they penalised more or less in relation to the left and far-right.

The *"vandalism of the fascist hordes and their Arrow Cross accomplices"*[32] was finally stopped by the *"heroic Soviet troops"*, and on April 4 Hungary was completely liberated (in fact, this only occurred later).[33] The term "Holocaust" was not even mentioned, only a short sentence was added: *"Masses of Jews were killed on the banks of the Danube, the savagery of the fascists was boundless."*[34] (In general, discriminatory measures against Jews were not included in this book either.) Subsequent coursebooks differ significantly in this point, as a detailed discussion of the Hungarian Holocaust was given high priority.

29 Idem, p. 166.
30 Idem, p. 167.
31 Idem, p. 168.
32 Idem, p. 173.
33 Idem, p. 174.
34 Idem, p. 173.

This coursebook provides a completely consistent interpretation of the past in the spirit of socialist ideology, with the help of real, but selected, or partly real or untrue facts. In this way, it creates a textual tradition, a main focus, and nodes of interpretation, which, although sometimes in more subtle ways or in completely different circumstances, are present until 1989. At the same time, it is also clear that, omitting the socialist phraseology from the structure and phraseology of the text, this main text is still decisive for modern coursebooks. Indeed, even today, these events, questions and problems are basically the focus (and those not appearing here are not really covered later either), enriched with lifestyle, cultural, and spiritual history lessons.

The multi-author temporary coursebook[35] has in many respects adopted the same approach as the Lukács books published shortly before, so the following analysis is primarily limited to highlighting the conceptual novelties. The genesis of the Horthy regime is described as follows: *"The counter-revolutionary regime which came to power using foreign weapons sought to establish a base among the masses through unbridled nationalist, chauvinist, anti-Semitic incitement and social demagogy with grand promises to improve the means of livelihood."*[36] Unlike Lajos Lukács, the Treaty of Trianon is explained in a broader sense: *"This peace treaty was an imperialist treaty. The signing of the treaty provided an opportunity for the Hungarian ruling classes to launch another unbridled demagogic campaign. The Hungarian ruling classes that actually provoked the Treaty of Trianon committed the wildest chauvinist incitement against the neighbouring peoples. They tried to convince the Hungarian public that the serious decisions of the peace treaty were affecting Hungary because of the Soviet Republic. At the same time they remained utterly silent about the fact that the Red Army of the Soviet Republic had begun a heroic struggle to change the demarcation line to be significantly more advantageous than the borders defined in the peace treaty."*[37] At this point, it is worth briefly referring to the Vix memorandum, which is illustrated vaguely in this coursebook: "[…] *Lieutenant Colonel Vyx* [sic] *handed*

35 Nagy, Kempelen, Bellér & Incze 1955.
36 Idem, p. 155.
37 Ibid.

over to the Hungarian government a memorandum demanding the evacuation of completely Hungarian territories."[38] That is true, but the text does not clarify that it was a question of creating a demilitarised zone. However, several later coursebooks talk about a Romanian border along the Tisza River and mention it as a Vix memorandum, even though he only presented the memorandum of the Entente. On the other hand, it would definitely be worth clarifying whether the Hungarian Red Army waged a patriotic or a self-defence war.

The coursebook speaks of *"increased fascism"* from the 1930s, and it was around this time that terror and demagoguery intensified.[39] (From a purely pedagogical point of view, it would certainly have been important to clarify the two concepts. This is also a good example of the fact that methodological aspects were completely subordinated to the transmission of ideology. Incidentally, conceptual ambiguity is still common in coursebooks to this day.)

The wording of the text, constantly echoed in later coursebooks is very interesting: *"Prime Minister Teleki, seeing the failure of his policy, escaped responsibility and committed suicide."*[40] The blame on Teleki is less strong, but Hungary did not merely support, and allow the Germans to advance through the country, as *"Horthy gave an order to attack Yugoslavia."*[41] The bombing of Kassa and the annihilation of the Hungarian Second Army at Voronezh are not even mentioned.[42] Subsequent events appear in more subtle ways than in Lukács's, but Horthy is more vigorously condemned for the Arrow Cross coming to power: *"In this situation, Szálasi and his fascist gang were the only ones to serve the German fascists unconditionally. Even on the day the proclamation was issued, Horthy resigned in favour of Szálasi, at the request of the Germans. Thus, he let Szálasi's fascist gangs reign over the Hungarian people. The Horthy regime and Horthy himself is responsible for bringing the Szálasi gang to power.* [...] *The scum of society exercised terror over the Hungarian people* [i.e. the Arrow

38 Idem, pp. 134–135.
39 Idem, p. 175.
40 Idem, p. 195.
41 Idem, p. 196.
42 Idem, p. 199.

Cross]."[43] In its approach, wording and structure, this coursebook conveys the socialist ideology by consistently following the "Lukács path".

The temporary note[44] is a short, 50-page little booklet that essentially discusses the Horthy era and the few years that followed. In its approach, it consistently reflects the ideological, substantive and structural guidelines of Lukács's books, but due to its brevity it is much more concise. It creates a connection between the Entente and the White Terror as follows: *"The international proletariat, the Soviet state, and the protests of Western progressive public opinion forced the governments of the Entente Powers to reconsider the activities of the gangs.* [...] *however, it was 'established' that there was no white terror in Hungary. Thus, along with Horthy and his associates, the Entente imperialists were also responsible for the horrors of the White Terror."*[45] The explanation of the Treaty of Trianon was also put into a new perspective: *"It was not a joint struggle for freedom between the Hungarian people and nationalities that led to the collapse of historic Hungary, but the support of the Entente imperialists, with which the historical ruling classes restored their counter-revolutionary rule concealing the seeds of new strife and war, which caused the tragedy of the Hungarian nation and Hungarian people."*[46] At this time, Gyula Gömbös was fascist to such an extent that he wanted to implement a German-style total dictatorship, but this was tolerated not even by the Hungarian ruling classes.[47] Thus Gömbös is portrayed as being even grimmer than in Lukács's books. Although the book precisely follows those works as regards the further description of the era and events.

In its appearance, methodology and ideological message, the Szamuely–Ránki coursebook[48] follows the Lukács direction, but adds several other ideas. Regarding the White Terror, Horthy was mentioned to have been the "suppressor" of the Cattaro mutiny (in fact, this was not true) and puts the death

43 Idem, p. 202.
44 Incze 1958.
45 Idem, p. 4.
46 Idem, p. 6.
47 Idem, p. 22.
48 Szamuely & Ránki 1960. (A version of this: Szamuely, Ránki & Almási 1967.)

toll at more than 5,000.[49] The Treaty of Trianon is given the same interpretation as before. In describing the consolidation, the focus is again on negative interpretations: the inadequacy of the Nagyatádi agrarian reform, betrayal of the Social Democrats (see the Bethlen-Peyer Pact), economic dependency on Western loans and negotiations with Italian fascists.[50] Regarding the nature of the system, the text identifies the Christian Szeged idea as a chauvinist, clerical, anti-Semitic and reactionary Hungarian imperialist ideology.[51] This is followed by a description of the struggles of the Communists and workers against the regime and then the effects of the Great Depression (especially poverty and strikes). Then follows the presentation of Hungary's path to becoming fascist, concluding with a summary.

Hungary's involvement in the Second World War was included in two separate lessons in the thematic units presenting the World War. Incidentally, this structural solution is still typical of most secondary school history coursebooks. Considering the large nodes, the text comes as no surprise: Teleki committed suicide because of the weight of responsibility, *"instead of turning the country against Germany"*[52] (this possibility is a new element of variation), Kassa was bombed by disguised German aircraft agreed by the chiefs of general staff of both Germany and Hungary,[53] the Hungarian Second Army suffered one of the greatest defeats in Hungarian military history at the Don,[54] and Horthy compromisingly complied with the demands of the Germans from the occupation in March 1944 until the appointment of Szálasi.[55] Finally, the "*fascist scum*"[56] was defeated by the Red Army, which liberated Hungary by April 4. This book is in line with the tradition of coursebooks published in the 1950s, which continues steadily in Endre Balogh's books.

49 Idem, p. 198.
50 Idem, pp. 201–202.
51 Idem, p. 203.
52 Idem, p. 238.
53 Idem, p. 239.
54 Idem, p. 241.
55 Idem, p. 246.
56 Ibid.

Surprisingly, Balogh's book[57] discusses the Horthy era as a whole, from its genesis to its end, which is typical of few coursebooks. *"The armed power of the counter-revolution was exercised by the officers' units and the so-called national army. Their leader, Miklós Horthy was driven by sentiments of hostility towards the working classes. It is no coincidence that this officer, ruthless and raw against the workers and the agrarian proletariat, was elevated by the armed forces to be the leader of the counter-revolution. The only political aim of the officers' units was the White Terror, i.e. retaliation and to destroy the achievements of the proletarian dictatorship, and to ensure the class system."*[58] Even if we try to approach the text 'naively' and not criticise it with outside knowledge, problems can still arise: 1. Why was the National Army *"so-called"*, who called it like this? 2. Was there only one thing driving Horthy? 3. How did the armed forces elevate him to be a leader? Exactly who did this? 4. Exactly how many people fell victim to the White Terror and who were they? The answer to this latter question can be found in small print: within a few months, the toll was 5,000 dead, 70,000 imprisoned and 100,000 emigrants.[59] Horthy was also elected regent under pressure from the White Terror,[60] but the issue of his power and the form of the state is not addressed any more. It is interesting about the Bethlen Consolidation: the text does not mention that the government did not act "equally" with right-wing and left-wing organisations, as it writes *"Bethlen curbed the white terrorist organisations* [...] *at the same time he outlawed the Communist Party. However, he refused to outlaw all organisations of the working class."*[61] In connection with the consolidation, the spirit of the regime is indicated as follows: *"The term 'Christian' meant liberalism,*

57 Balogh 1985. It was published annually between 1972 and 1987. Edited by Szabó, K. and Vértes, R. (This textbook has a specific and an earlier version. The specific one is: Balogh & Mann, which had 8 editions between 1981 and 1988. Edited by Nagy, E. & Nagy Imréné. The book covers the period from the Second World War to the late 1970s. Its appearance, structure, approach, and phrasing are the same as those of the textbook prepared for the secondary schools of workers. It is an interesting "variant" that, according to the text, it was clearly German aircraft with Soviet markings that bombed Kassa. 44. The earlier book is: Eperjessy 1969. This was also printed in parallel, the 8th edition was published in 1975.)

58 Idem, p. 205.

59 Ibid.

60 Idem, p. 207.

61 Idem, p. 201.

denial of democracy, an anti-worker and anti-communist approach, as well as anti-Semitism."[62] *"The adjective 'national' did not mean legitimate national self-consciousness in the dictionary of the counter-revolutionary system either, but extreme nationalism, chauvinism."*[63] It is mentioned as an interesting detail, that Bethlen, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Rome (1927), had already embarked on a path of becoming fascist,[64] while most coursebooks expect Gömbös to "move to the right." The lesson on the economy and society closing the 1920s, includes, as a novelty, a long and detailed description of workers' movements.[65] In the 1930s, the description of Gyula Gömbös, who *"made an attempt to introduce total fascism"*, is strongly emphasised.[66] The Darányi, Imrédy and Teleki governments are barely mentioned, but the subject is repeatedly intertwined with the fact that the Communists were already fighting against the advance of fascism.[67] *"All of this meant the complete failure of the manoeuvring policy. Teleki did not want to oppose the catastrophic policy of the ruling classes; he escaped responsibility and committed suicide."*[68] Teleki's suicide note is not listed as a source. The reason for Hungary's entry into the war in 1941 is also not called into question: the general staff of both Germany and Hungary co-organised the bombing of Kassa.[69] The Újvidék (today: Novi Sad, Serbia) massacre is also connected to Bárdossy's activities, as follows: *"He introduced forced labour service and used it to systematically exterminate left-wing and Jewish citizens. All of this culminated in the massacres in the vicinity of Újvidék, in which more than 3,000 civilians were killed.* [...] *in fact, it was organised by the German intelligence* [...] *with the help of certain Hungarian officers of German descent and Nazi sentiment* [...] *The commander ordering the massacre fled to German-occupied territory and was convicted in absentia by the Hungarian court-martial."*[70]

62 Idem, p. 214.
63 Ibid.
64 Idem, p. 215.
65 Idem, pp. 224–229.
66 Idem, p. 238.
67 Idem, p. 245, p. 248.
68 Idem, p. 251.
69 Ibid.
70 Idem, p. 253.

"As a result of the military failures of the Axis powers in 1943 and the annihilation of the Hungarian Second Army at Voronezh, the Kállay government sought to remain [...] *in power by reintroducing an insincere foreign policy."*[71] This detail reveals the author's problems and approach: since the wording had to avoid the Soviet troops getting a bad reputation, he switched to passive structures. Then, as he had previously blamed the Hungarian general staff for cooperating with the Germans and pursuing a "catastrophic policy", he needed to avoid praising them for their intention to withdraw: therefore, political virtue became an ethical sin, insincerity. However, blaming Horthy for the German occupation and the exit attempt is also mentioned as he remained in power after the occupation, thus "[...] *ensuring the smooth operation of Hungarian state institutions in favour of the fascists*",[72] and the exit attempt was unsuccessful because he refused to arm the workers.[73] This was followed by the Arrow Cross Rule (11 lines)[74] and the Liberation of Hungary (description in one page).[75] In connection with the latter, the text states that Hungary was liberated on April 4,[76] even though this was not true.

Jóvérné's coursebook for secondary schools of workers[77] was published in parallel with the book of Endre Balogh[78] and had several editions. It is very similar in appearance and structure to it, but has been supplemented as a standard with a chronological table, historical aphorisms, a glossary, and a list of recommended exam questions.

The book, both in terms of wording and style, is similar to the aforementioned Balogh book, for example, condemning the "bourgeois" and "capitalist" systems. There are further similarities: in describing the White Terror, it literally repeats

71 Idem, p. 257.
72 Idem, p. 259.
73 Idem, pp. 260–261.
74 Idem, pp. 261–262.
75 Idem, pp. 263–264.
76 Idem, p. 264.
77 Jóvérné 1987. It was published once again in 1988. Edited by: Balogh, S., Jarmik, I, Nagy, Zs. L. & Szabó, K.
78 Balogh 1985.

Balogh's data.[79] Later on, it also discusses the same topics in the same structure, using the same text sources, figures, and charts. However, this book is more radical than Balogh's regarding the Bethlen Consolidation and the evaluation and condemnation of the Prime Minister: *"Bethlen established a conservative dictatorship of the ruling classes disguised by ostensible parliamentarism. His politics also involved neglected, fascist elements. At the same time, the weakened, but still existing civil Left and the legal workers' movement formed also an integral part of the political system.* [...] *three basic elements, i.e. the anti-revolutionary approach, nationalism, and anti-Semitism were present in the ideas of almost each group. The idea of a Christian-national Hungary was in focus, where the word Christian meant anti-liberalism and anti-democracy, suppression of the workers' movement and persecution of Communists, as well as anti-Semitism. Only those who identified themselves with extreme nationalism and chauvinism and made the fate of the nation dependent on integral revision* [...] *had the right to be patriots in Hungary in the Horthy era."*[80]

Unlike Balogh, the author evaluates the developments of the 1930s as follows: *"So in the 1930s, political rivalry was growing between conservative-reactionary, seemingly parliamentary methods and intensifying total fascist aspirations. Meanwhile, the country's leadership gradually moved to the right."*[81] According to this coursebook and that of Balogh, Teleki, seeing the failure of his policy, committed suicide.[82] The reason for Hungary's entry into the war in 1941 is unclear, but it was likely that German aircraft bombed Kassa.[83] The defeat at the Don is mentioned as follows: "[...] *the Hungarian Second Army was annihilated (40,000 people died, 70,000 were wounded or taken prisoner, and 80% of the equipment was destroyed). In three weeks, Hungarian forces suffered much heavier casualties at Voronezh, than during the whole War of Independence in 1848–49. The official propaganda concealed the true casualty rate. The public*

79 Idem, p. 205.
80 Jóvérné 1987, p. 142.
81 Idem, p. 156.
82 Idem, p. 208.
83 Idem, p. 209.

was not aware of the rates of destruction and the role of the Germans."[84] Basically, the coursebook does not blame Horthy for the failed exit attempt and then for Szálasi's appointment; in fact, it describes the former with a slightly wry humour: *"Horthy's proclamation via radio on October 15 asking for an armistice was unexpected for the country."* This surprise effect could obviously be beneficial. *"However, this unprepared move by the regent was not a surprise for the Germans, but for his own potential allies."*[85] The structure, use of concepts, phrasing and sources of this coursebook are remarkably similar to Balogh's book. However, there are significant differences at some points. Observing the years of publication (1987 and 1988), it is surprising that two years before the transition, this book carries on the politicised content of Balogh's coursebook, which was first published in 1972 and then had 14 editions until 1987.

The transition and what comes after

The first edition of the new Jóvérné coursebook[86] was published before the transition, and the last one after that.[87] The version published in 1991 is already a large-format publication with a colourful cover, pictures and charts, compared to the other coursebooks written by Endre Balogh and Ágota Jóvérné Szirtes. Two things are worth considering before reviewing the content: on the one hand, this book was published in 1991, two years after the transition; on the other hand, the author(s) notes in the introduction that *"It is also natural that there are* [...] *debates and disagreements among historians in the assessment of certain events. Our coursebook conveys the current knowledge and values of historical science."*[88]

84 Idem, p. 212.
85 Idem, p. 216.
86 Jóvérné & Sipos 1991. Edited by: Balogh, S. & Horányi, I. The first edition was published in 1982 under the name of Jóvérné Szirtes, Á.
87 "[...] suddenly compiled in the year of the transition, this textbook variant was written by the earlier authors, Ágota Jóvérné Szirtes and Péter Sipos [...]" Murányi 2006.
88 Jóvérné & Sipos 1991, p. 5.

What is the value system this coursebook represents in 1991 in relation to the Horthy era? At first sight, it seems the same as the original edition in 1982, and nothing seems to have changed compared to Jóvérné's other coursebook and the texts of Balogh (see above)! The text begins with the fact that the early Horthy era saw the White Terror "raging" as never before, namely the extrajudicial killing of citizens had never happened before in Hungarian history.[89] However, the tone of the book then changes: István Bethlen no longer wanted a conservative dictatorship, but a conservative parliamentary democracy;[90] the nature of the Horthy regime is now controversial:[91] Some highlight its fascist, others its liberal, and still others its conservative dictatorial characteristics.[92] The Christian-national ideology of the era was *"rooted in the deep and sincere religiosity and related patriotism of most of the masses."*[93] Yet Gyula Gömbös was still considered as a user of dictatorial and fascist methods.[94] In the 1930s, a struggle arose between conservative forces and social groups seeking to establish a fascist dictatorship and not between conservative-reactionary seemingly parliamentary methods and total fascism, as Jóvérné's other book[95] also mentions.[96] Teleki's suicide is put in a different perspective in this coursebook: *"With this act of great moral value, the Prime Minister wanted to warn the nation of an impending tragedy."*[97] The bombing of Kassa also appears in more subtle ways: "[...] *unidentified aircraft bombed Kassa. The military leadership attributed this action to Soviet aircraft."*[98] Description of the catastrophe at the Don, and the Hungarian exit attempt, as well as Szálasi's appointment[99] remained almost completely unchanged, compared to the other coursebook by Jóvérné.

89 Idem, p. 99.
90 Idem, p. 103.
91 Idem, p. 105.
92 Ibid.
93 Idem, p. 117.
94 Idem, p. 124.
95 Jóvérné 1987.
96 Jóvérné & Sipos 1991, p. 124.
97 Idem, p. 151.
98 Ibid.
99 Idem, p. 155, p. 158.

It is also typical of this coursebook, along with almost all of the previous ones, that there are indisputable answers to questions disputed in historical science, and the main text is basically not explaining, but describing the events. The topics and the structure are both broadly in line with the subsequent books, except that relatively strong emphasis is still placed on the communist resistance.[100] Nevertheless, the impact of the change in political regime is substantial for this coursebook, but as regards the method, it follows the previous editions.

There are no questions, no comprehensive analysis and no thought-provoking pros and cons in the main text. However, a significant part of the vocabulary of communist historiography has been removed from the main text, and many value judgments (except for the evaluation of the White Terror) have been refined. In fact, these descriptions are remarkably similar to the content of coursebooks written up to 2005, more specifically, later coursebooks largely use similar wording. In effect, it is plain to see in this book how socialist content has been transformed step by step; how it has been refined or just changed to opposite assessments; and the structure, nodes, issues, at least for most of them, remained, in essence, decisive later on.

In summary, other coursebooks typically contain an abundance of data, suggest objectivity by avoiding both ideological, emotional and evaluating expressions in general. Instead of discussing these books in detail, here are only a few ideas of how the Horthy era or some of its elements are evaluated.

The coursebook entitled History 4. 1914–1990[101] shows a detailed and data-driven description of 76 years indicated in the title in a total of 325 pages (including all the annexes). In relation to the spirituality of the era, the book puts the expressions Christian and national in quotes and also explains it why: namely, they were interpreted only as rhetorical clichés by many.[102] It takes a stand in favour of Teleki's suicide, the prime minister *"escaped responsibility*

100 Idem, pp. 128–130. Lesson entitled Leftist forces against fascism.

101 The book was compiled by a working community invited by the Lajos Magyar Foundation, including Tamás Krausz and László Szarka. Well-known historians, such as Lajos Izsák and Ignác Romsics were also added as editors.

102 Ibid.

and committed suicide [...] *He may have hoped his action would provide Horthy a basis for withdrawing at the last minute."*[103] The issue of bombing of Kassa is not raised in connection with Hungary's entry into the war.[104] Regarding the atrocities in Újvidék, the author mentions that the chief officers in charge were convicted and escaped from the country and joined the SS; and beyond that, Hungarians living in Serbia fell victim to retaliation after the war.[105] The expression *"catastrophe at the Don"* is not mentioned in this book, instead, it is simply the annihilation of the Hungarian Second Army, as a result of which *"120,000 soldiers and forced labourers were lost."*[106] The text does not blame Horthy personally for the failed exit attempt and Szálasi's appointment, but it describes the withdrawal in detail[107] and also gives an in-depth analysis of the consequences of the Arrow Cross rule (which, unlike by others, is not called a *terror*) and the principle of "enduring to the end".[108]

Unlike most other coursebooks, the one by László Lator, Jr.[109] gives a description of the White Terror as follows: *"Judicial (and extrajudicial) proceedings were also instituted against the participants in the revolutions* [...]. *In general, units continued to autonomously engage in acts of deadly retribution, sometimes though with implied consent of Horthy. They carried through with killings which claimed victims including the so-called Lenin boys, communist leaders, as well as social democrats and sympathisers of revolutions. Anti-Semitism was gaining ground. Many were imprisoned and forced to emigrate."*[110] The "kingdom without a king" and the powers of the regent are analysed on the basis of pros and cons: (1) Horthy had the right to dissolve the National Assembly only in the event that its functions suffered from "prolonged incapacitation"; (2) the regent's authority was not

103 Idem, p. 102.
104 Idem, p. 104.
105 Idem, p. 107.
106 Idem, p. 109.
107 Idem, p. 117.
108 Idem, pp. 118–121. At this point, it does not talk about the Hungarian Holocaust, but earlier, in connection with the German occupation (Idem, p. 115).
109 Lator 1995. First edition. Edited by: Horváth, J. & Salamon, K.
110 Idem, p. 58.

hereditary; (3) the regent could be held liable; (4) the regent's approval was not required for laws entering into force; and (5) on election day, the military surrounded the Parliament.[111] However, we do not gain a detailed picture of the consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty; there is only a one-page summary of it.[112] A description of the 1920s is similar to other coursebooks: *numerus clausus*, agrarian reform, royal coups, Bethlen Consolidation. At the same time, the Frank counterfeit scandal is also included,[113] but the presentation of culture and spirituality of the era was omitted. After Bethlen's resignation, Gyula Károlyi (and, unlike in most coursebooks, the bombing of Szilveszter Matuska) is also mentioned, followed by Gömbös, who regarded Italian fascist system to be his primary political model.[114] In describing the governments of Prime Minister Darányi and Imrédy, and the successes of the revision, the theory of "drifting towards Nazi Germany" or "moving to the right" as well as ethnic conflicts arising during the revision of the territorial changes, unlike in many coursebooks, are not emphasised. The death of Teleki and the bombing of Kassa are also not called into question.[115] In connection with the catastrophe at the Don, the following data is provided: 40,000 people died, 70,000 were wounded or taken prisoner.[116] The exit attempt and Szálasi's appointment is not evaluated. However, the text places a relatively strong emphasis on social and political anti-Nazism, so unlike most coursebooks, the Hungarian National Uprising Liberation Committee (MNFFB)[117] and the fact that Stalin did not support Hungarian anti-Nazi partisan movements[118] are also mentioned. Although this is not justified in the text, it remains as a question for the students.[119]

111 Idem, p. 60.
112 Idem, p. 63.
113 Idem, p. 89.
114 Idem, p. 110.
115 Idem, pp. 158–159.
116 Idem, p. 162. (The data is the same as in Jóvérné's book published in 1987.)
117 Idem, p. 167.
118 Idem, p 168.
119 Idem, p. 170.

Since its first publication, the Salamon book[120] has been a focus of public attention and some of its parts have been criticised or examined by many. The coursebook is basically centred on political history, including a wealth of facts, dates and names. This is immediately clear when describing the beginning of the Horthy era: *"The attention of the Friedrich government* [...] *turned to the National Army, the only armed force with actual power, and its commander, Miklós Horthy. Even at the time of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, Horthy – as defence minister in the counter-government in Szeged – began raising the National Army. At the beginning of August, he established the General Command of the National Army, and then flew to Siófok to set up his headquarters there. Thus, Central and Southern Transdanubia came under his control."*[121]

The coursebook compiled by Gyula Hosszú may be the most data-driven of all.[122] It is clear from the fact that it presents thirty years in the title in almost 400 pages. The lesson entitled *Victory of the Counter-Revolution* first includes a short biography of Miklós Horthy; it then describes the White Terror in great detail; and after that, it compares the Red and White Terror, quoting sources on both grouped in two columns, that is, using the means of comparison, source criticism, and pros and cons. According to his biography, Horthy is basically not considered as a talented politician. The opening sentence states: *"Chance played a very important role in his career. The Tisza and Horthy families had strong ties of friendship."*[123] The White Terror appears as follows: *"Miklós Horthy, commander-in-chief of the National Army raised by the counter-government in Szeged, moved to Transdanubia with his troops. The independence of the General Command severely undermined the authority of the government in Szeged, so* [...] *the government finally resigned. Horthy* [...] *began to operate autonomously of the Friedrich government too. He recruited soldiers, seized large sums of money*

120 Salamon 1995. The first edition was published in 1995 and then reprinted nine times until 2003. Edited by: Litván, Gy. & Párdányi, M. The book is currently published by the Nemzedékek Tudása Textbook Publisher, in essentially unchanged form and content regarding the Horthy era.

121 Salamon 1995, p. 52.

122 Hosszú 1996. Edited by: Horváth, J. & Horváth, P.

123 Idem, p. 52.

in financial institutions to buy weapons and ammunition in Austria. His army, led mainly by gentry officers, [...] *operated freely* [...] *The officer forces moved through Transdanubia with cavalry units and punished the local leaders and sympathisers of the revolutions by beatings and hangings. Jewish descent was often enough to merit punishment. Jews and communists were the same in the minds of detachment officers. The White Terror proclaimed an unchangeable world order, the futility of rebellion. Although Horthy did not initiate terror, he first acknowledged it."*[124] In comparing the pre-1918 and 1920 electoral laws as well as in describing Horthy's powers as regent and its expansion in 1937, the text again uses a very illustrative comparison to describe the democracy of the Horthy regime.[125] The peace treaty concluded in Versailles is elaborated in a 12-page lesson, including a description of the Treaty of Trianon, ethnic maps and data tables. In connection with the Christian national idea, and presented as a contrast, there are many quotations to read from Dezső Szabó, Béla Bangha, Ottokár Prohászka as well as Gyula Szekfű's *Three Generations.*

In a large thematic unit entitled *Hungary (1931–1939)* there is a brief description of the Károlyi government, followed by another concise summary of Gyula Gömbös (the issue of "fascism" is not mentioned, but the reforms),[126] and a very extensive section on society, artistic styles, ideas and political trends. The latter includes a description of Liberals, which is completely missing from most coursebooks. The text then returns to political history, followed by a description of the Darányi and Imrédy governments; again, using sources, the text describes the parliamentary debate pros and cons on the Jewish law grouped in two columns, unlike most Hungarian coursebooks,[127] and also writes about the negotiations in Bled in connection with the First Vienna Award.[128]

The topic of the second Teleki government was included in the large unit about the Second World War. Teleki's death is clear: *"The concept of armed neutrality had collapsed. In Hungary, there was no basis for an open confrontation with the Germans.*

124 Idem, pp. 51–52.
125 Idem, p. 55.
126 Idem, p. 247.
127 Idem, p. 277.
128 Idem, p. 278.

Teleki committed suicide at dawn on 3 April. His suicide note was concealed."[129] The main text gives a detailed description of the bombing of Kassa, as a pretext for war, and mentions, for example, that not only was there a bombing, but a high-speed train was also fired on; however, as in other coursebooks, contradictory facts masking the nationality of the bombing aircraft are not revealed, and, of course, theories about potential perpetrators are not included either.[130] The *"catastrophe at the Don"* is also indicated in great detail supplemented by a text source and a map.[131] In connection with the German occupation, the book gives a detailed description of the meeting in Klessheim, which never or hardly ever appears in other coursebooks.[132] Moreover, it is compared by juxtaposing two sources, a description by Hitler's chief interpreter and Horthy's memoirs:[133] Horthy is not blamed *expressis verbis* for the failure of the exit attempt, the text only suggests it: "[...] *the commanders of the Hungarian units in the city disobeyed the 'supreme warlord'* [...], *but in the morning, Horthy himself gave an order to cease resistance.* [...] *In exchange for assurances that his son would be released from captivity, Horthy approved appointing Szálasi to serve as prime minister."*[134] It is interesting that Szálasi's "terror" is not explained in great detail, but Hungarian resistance, such as the Hungarian National Uprising Liberation Committee (MNFFB),[135] which is not mentioned in other coursebooks (except one), the siege of Budapest[136] as well as the reprisals against Hungarians in the surrounding states are presented in detail.[137]

Even in the early 2000s, several books were published,[138] similar to current coursebooks as regards their appearance and methodological solutions. However, they do not achieve a paradigm shift in the evaluation of the Horthy era.

129 Idem, p. 297.
130 Idem, p. 310.
131 Idem, p. 312.
132 Idem, p. 329.
133 Idem, p. 330.
134 Idem, p. 338.
135 Idem, p. 342.
136 Idem, p. 343.
137 Idem, p. 345.
138 Kovács & Kovácsné 2001; Bihari, Dupcsik, & Répárszky 2001; Dupcsik, Répárszky & Ujvári 2002.

Summary

In reviewing several coursebooks, it is clear that those published until 1989 were marked by direct, clear socialist phraseology and a negative evaluation of the Horthy era. As regards the texts, Jóvérné's book represents an interim solution, which changed the assessment at a few points and removed most of the vocabulary of the socialist ideology. The language of the coursebooks published in the 1990s and 2000s was objective (without anger, with less emotion and evaluation, thus seemingly objective); and their content included a large amount of data, factual information and various textual sources. Thus, unlike pre-1989 coursebooks, they suggest an assessment and an opinion of the Horthy era only by reading between the lines; this may be concluded from the number, selection and content of the preferred facts and sources.

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CSABA KÁSA

THE ROLE OF MESTERFILM KFT. IN CREATING NATIONALIST FILM PRODUCTION

"I must confess, I consider cinema to be more important than parliament, than the Monarchy's politics in the Balkans, the pension law or Pavlik,[1] because [...] it is enormous social propaganda, if they learn how to use it" wrote Dezső Szabó in the periodical *Nyugat* in 1912.[2] He was not only a thinker with a prophetic vision on this issue alone, but this particular prognosis turned out to be fundamentally important. The essence of film production in the period from the end of the 1930s is generally disguised by saying that "the films of the period were entertainment industry products, and they were made with this admitted purpose all around the world," as István Nemeskürty noted in his book reflecting socialist cultural policy.[3] But this is only half the truth, because in Hungary – where at the time two worlds were living side by side – it was only natural that both sides used the opportunities inherent in cinematographic art to spread their own ideas, cultures and life experiences. Thus, taking Szabó's opinion into account as well, the previous statement could be modified to say that film production in the 1920s and 1930s was a profit-generating business, *as well as* propaganda for the lifestyle of one of the two worlds and a mirror of their

1 Obstructing opposition representatives were led out of the Parliament on 4 July and 17 September 1912 by Police Inspector Ferenc Pavlik's men on the orders of István Tisza.
2 Szabó 1912, Moziban [In the cinema]. Nyugat, 5(24) p. 976.
3 Nemeskürty 1983, p. 361.

desires. The other world – the Hungarian world – could not just idly stand by and watch, but they did not have many tools at their disposal, precisely because in the era of free entrepreneurship the film industry *also* operated perfectly well as a lucrative line of business, and governments were not supposed to interfere with business. They had no other options but to use indirect tools such as formulating expectations and a system of funding and censorship, which at that time was accepted as natural around the world.

Government expectations were straightforward and well-known. "A strong sense of duty must permeate every aspect of state-controlled Hungarian film production. […] The Hungarian past and Hungarian life are full of intriguing issues. Capture those with courage. Let us strive to take part in the spiritually uplifting work, the successful accomplishment of which the future of the Hungarian people depends on."[4] This requirement was reiterated to Hungarian filmmakers by State Secretary Gyula Wlassics,[5] Chairman of the Hungarian National Film Committee,[6] in the introduction of the book published for the 10th anniversary of sound film production. In other words, participating in working towards the *Hungarian* future with *Hungarian* dedication through topics taken from the *Hungarian* past and present. In short, we can call this nationalist film production.

In this study, we seek to answer the question why – 10 years after the first fully Hungarian-talking feature film[7] – this still had to be specially requested

4 Lajta 1942, pp. 4–5.

5 The sources of biographical details in this study are primarily from: Gulyás (1939–1944): Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000–1990. http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/; Magyar írók élete és munkái. Arranged for publication by János Viczián with the use of Pál Gulyás' data collections. Vol. VII–XIX. Budapest (1990–2002). Magyar Katolikus Lexikon. http://lexikon.katolikus.hu/; Magyar zsidó lexikon. http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04093/; Pallas Nagy Lexikona. http://mek.oszk.hu/00000/00060/ andhttp://mek.oszk.hu/09300/09332/; Révai nagy lexikona. http://mek.oszk.hu/06700/06758/; Szinnyei, J. Magyar írók élete és munkái. http://mek.oszk.hu/03600/03630/.

6 Dr Baron Gyula Lóránt Wlassics, Jr., de Zalánkemén (1884–1962), writer, state secretary. Obtained his doctorate in political sciences at Budapest University (today: Eötvös Loránd University). He held various offices in the Ministry of Religion and Public Education from 1908 until 1944 when he retired. He was Chairman of the Hungarian National Film Committee from 1940 until 1944.

7 In the literature, the 400. Magyar Világhíradó [the 400th Hungarian World News], which

and emphasised. We then describe a film company launched in 1938, which worked according to the above principles, while generating profit for its owners and the country as well.

In autumn 1929, the first partly talking film was imported into Hungarian cinemas from overseas, which was followed by several other such films in the same year. At the same time, Fox Movietone News recorded a sound newsreel with Miklós Horthy in which the regent sent a message to the American people. In the almost 18-minute footage recorded on a hunting trip with Archduke Joseph August, Prime Minister István Bethlen appears at the side of the head of state.[8] At the time, previously recorded silent films were dubbed afterwards, and sound films in Hungarian were produced in Paris, where production conditions were already developed. Market actors saw the business opportunity, and cinema owners started to acquire the necessary film projection equipment.

The state began laying down the foundations, probably to keep Hungarian sound film production within the borders of the country. The Hunnia Film Studio, which was already owned by the state,[9] was modernised and expanded. From the numerous technical possibilities available, the German Tobis-Klang

aired in October 1931, is considered to be the first fully talking newsreel and A kék bálvány [A Blue Idol], which premiered on 25 September 1931, to be the first fully Hungarian sound feature film.

8 See Kása 2020c for more details.

9 The first studio with the name Hunnia was built in an area now called Újlipótváros in June 1911. In 1925, the government took control of reviving national film production. A regulation was issued to establish the Film Industry Fund and the Hungarian Film Office. In 1928, the former bought the Corvin Film Studio in Zugló [part of Budapest] which had gone bankrupt, and at the same time the government established Hunnia Filmgyár Zrt. to operate the studio and tasked it with feature film production. Distributors had to pay contributions to the Film Industry Fund on the foreign films shown in Hungary. This revenue boosted Hungarian film production and the Fund provided working capital for Hunnia from it. The most modern film studio in Eastern Europe up to that point was constructed based on the designs of Gyula Jenő Padányi in 1936. Following Soviet occupation, it was assigned to the authority of the Department of Art in the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, and communist censorship was exercised by the National Motion Picture Audit Committee of the Ministry of Interior. In 1948, several film studios were merged into a so-called national film corporation, which was then nationalised in 1949 and continued operation as the Magyar Filmgyártó Nemzeti Vállalat (MAFILM).

system[10] was selected, with Minister of Interior Béla Scitovszky[11] personally negotiating the purchase in Berlin. At the same time, the government amended the film regulations. Distributors had to pay a surcharge to the Film Industry Fund based on the length of the films produced abroad and imported to Hungarian cinemas. This income – amounting to 2–3 million pengős – was spent on developing Hungarian film production: maintaining Hunnia, which provided the studio facilities, and financing the costs of film shooting periods. In addition, any company that created at least 400 metres of Hungarian-talking film footage, received a discount on imported films.

Filming of the first Hungarian sound film began on 29 April 1931 with Minister of Interior Scitovszky and Minister of Trade János Bud[12] present at the Hunnia Film Studio, which was modernised using the new technology.[13] In his opening speech, the Minister of Interior stressed that "achieving Hungarian success amidst the cutthroat competition of nations is a hundredfold more difficult. There is all the more reason to rejoice over a result which provides new opportunities for the creative forces of the nation. […] I sincerely hope that this studio will not only produce something Hungarian, but something good as well."[14] According to the Minister of Trade, the two prerequisites of Hungarian film production were met by this *modern* and *Hungarian* film studio. The tasks set for the future included: "To have Hungarian capital operate in the studio, to have Hungarian labour and knowledge benefit there, to have Hungarian art

10 For more details: https://www.hangosfilm.hu/filmenciklopedia/tobis-klang; (downloaded on 13 May 2020)

11 Dr Béla Scitovszky (1878–1959), Chairman of the National Assembly, minister. Member of the National Assembly from 1910 until 1935, elected Deputy Chairman twice, Chairman for one term. Minister of Interior between 1926 and 1931.

12 Dr János Bud (1880–1950), professor at the University of Technology, minister. Minister without portfolio between 1922 and 1924, Finance Minister until 1928, Minister of Economy without portfolio between 1928 and 1931, also Minister of Trade from 1929.

13 We found no data on how much the state spent on the reconstruction of the Hunnia. According to the media coverage of the period, the image and sound recording machines cost 700,000 pengős. By comparison, in the following years the budgets for individual films were between 100,000 and 120,000 pengős, and generating this amount exceeded the potentials of most businesses. This meant that had the state not provided the conditions, there would not have been sound film production in Hungary.

14 Lajta 1942, pp. 22–23.

triumph there and to have the Hungarian general public support the results of such production; thus Hungarian film production is created."[15] Hence, the government representatives made their expectations clear. They did not make these requests without reason, as they had created all of the conditions and secured the necessary financing in advance. Even Nemeskürty admitted this in his book published in 1983. "It is a fact that without the firm, untiring support of the Royal Hungarian Government, Hungarian sound film production could not have been established."[16]

Consequently, everything was in place to establish a fruitful, long-term cooperation between the two sides – the film production enterprises, and the state offering finances and infrastructure. But this is not what happened. The main reason for this, as we see, is that the business side did not fulfil even the bare minimum expected of it.

What kind of films were made until 1939 when the Chamber of Theatre and Film Arts was established? Light-hearted comedies that disregarded the problems of the Hungarian people and the countryside, and were intended mainly for audiences in Budapest and other large cities. Naturally, the fact that all the cinemas and thus the audiences were there, was a contributing factor, while farmers, the rural proletariat and the poor were simply preoccupied with making ends meet.

Let us take a look at the film *Hyppolit, the Butler* [Hungarian title: Hyppolit, a lakáj], the second sound film produced, which premiered in late autumn 1931 and has been referred to as a model film ever since. The plot is well-known: the lady of the upstart, *nouveau riche* Schneider family reckons the time has come – as they have already gathered enough money – to align with the aristocracy, which they wish to blend into, in appearances if nothing else. She hires a butler, who previously served at a baron's house, to force the family into adopting aristocratic manners. The petty bourgeois head of the family, the chattering-stumbling Jew cannot and will not participate. Which is cause enough for some scenes that seem comic to some, but are deplorably tiresome for others. The

15 Lajta 1942, p. 23.
16 Nemeskürty 1983, p. 360.

topic and the story are entirely removed from Hungarian everyday life and from Hungarian culture in general. Just remember, one of the "most comic" scenes where Mr Schneider, the businessman, wants to eat onions with his dinner in secret in his grand dining room framed with marble columns. At his wife's request, saying she will not tolerate onions at the dinner table, he replies: "What now? Shall I have the roasted duck with violets, or even better with a-a-anemones?" However, the manners of eating roast duck were not part of Hungarian culture at all, even then.[17]

In 1934, the film *The Dream Car* [Hungarian title: Meseautó] introduces the genre of comedy, which dominated this kind of film production until 1939. These are simple love stories focusing on misunderstandings between couples and finding each other. Variations of the plotline elements of *The Dream Car* make up many later films. Certain pieces are set in a bourgeois milieu. One half of the couple is from a richer or higher social class than the other. The marriage concluded means progress on the financial or social ladder as well. Comic twists can be based on love triangles or a third person, such as an opposing parent, hindering fulfilment. It often happens that a person pretends or is believed to be someone else, generally someone poorer, than in reality. It can generally be stated that the conflicts are always resolved and the stories have a happy ending. "As a result, although Hungarian films of the period do represent the social inequalities and the desire to reach higher, they do this in a way not to provoke the established order under any circumstances. The protagonists do not even think about rebelling and questioning social relations. With luck, some may have the chance to advance, but the only secure solution for that is good marriage – it is not by accident that this becomes the central theme of these films."[18] Hence this type of film is nothing other than a self-portrait of the bourgeoisie climbing the social ladder. Their desire is to integrate into the aristocracy. It is not by chance that the protagonists of these films tackle the obstacles without criticising society or rebelling, nor is it sheer coincidence that

17 The film has been a success with audiences ever since, and many consider it a significant work.

18 Vajdovich 2014.

they always achieve their goals. "A common theme of these films is that upward financial and social mobility is something one has to earn, and as the fairy tales go, those who do not strive, will not succeed."[19] At the same time, this is the key to the success of these films too, since some of the viewers living in Budapest and other large cities dreamt of such achievements: getting rich without work, gaining access to higher social groups – and in the manner portrayed in these films: triumphantly and as heroes.

As opposed to the expectations announced at the start of sound film production and continuously stressed thereafter, this ideology dominated most of the Hungarian films of the era. Nemeskürty's data suggest, that "in the four years between 1934 and 1939, 75 comedies were produced with the 'dream car' pattern in Hungarian film studios."[20] According to his compilation, *The Dream Car* was the 26th sound film, while the last sound film released in 1939 was the 135th. This means that 75 of the 110 films produced in the period were made with a storyline resembling that of *The Dream Car*. Almost three quarters of them!

Based on the above, it is understandable that from the middle of the 1930s, successive governments were searching for methods to regulate film production in conjunction with nationalist interests. In the first period, they had only one tool to achieve this: distributing studio time at Hunnia between production companies, but this only gave them a chance to select from among existing film proposals. For a while, preliminary and subsequent censorship only examined legal compliance; later it ensured the protection of the ideal of a national state and religious sentiments as well. In 1940, adherence to cultural requirements was included in the evaluation system.[21] But this was only enough to fine-tune the existing film market. These measures did not yet establish nationalist film production. In our opinion, the initiative of some small groups in this direction was influenced, supported and encouraged by certain people in government.

19 Ibid.
20 Nemeskürty 1965, p. 118.
21 For more detail, see Záhonyi-Ábel 2013.

On 29 December 1942, Antal Páger[22] performed at the charity gala of the two magazines *Magyar Futár* [Hungarian Courier] and *Egyedül Vagyunk* [We Are Alone], organised in support of the Red Cross. He held a presentation on the birth of the Hungarian sound film. "And the truth is, that we are sadly lagging behind our great foreign competitors with our shallow films. Among the numerous problems, the most pressing ones were financing and directors. The situation seemed almost hopeless, when fate graciously came to our aid. News got out that the 'colony of Hungarians', who had emigrated to Berlin a couple of years earlier and took up positions in the German 'film and related industries', was coming back to Pest. They were dragged back not exactly by homesickness, they were kind of forced to come. Then they arrived. And since they were here, they took over the impoverished, floundering Hungarian film production."[23] This is how Páger recalled the beginnings, which based on the first part of our study, we could call the "dream car" period. Páger and his friends also felt the need for change. He did not explain who he talked to, only the fact that plans were being made. "Yes, we sat down and talked. We were looking for real Hungarian cinematography, which not only entertains, but to some extent educates too. The new Hungarian film, which shows our faults as well, so that we can learn from them. Hungarian cinematography that builds faith and self-confidence in the common people, who tend to feel looked down on and oppressed, often unjustly. Depicting peasants, often flouted by comedies, as human beings. Showing the young generation of educators, what a majestic profession they have to fulfil, scaring misled Hungarian workers away from malignant communist teachings, fostering social cohesion without incitement. In short, how to be Hungarian! This is our goal, this is what we wish to serve with our humble creative skills. 'Poverty', as clever old film professionals used to say, was finally shown on the big cinema screen. Bathtub and bar scenes could be replaced by the issues of ordinary people. And if some people call them propaganda films a hundred times, or even mock our films, so be it! We

22 For biography details, see Kása 2020a.

23 A magyar film és a Magyar Nemzet [The Hungarian Film and the Hungarian Nation] Ellenzék, 5 January 1943, p. 5.

are happy to make propaganda for the Hungarian peasants, for the Hungarian workers, for the Hungarian educators, for the Hungarian engineers, for the Szeklers, for the Hungarian mountain ranges, for the Carpathian Mountains, for a happy Greater Hungary to come!"[24]

These goals, which had previously been formulated, soon found followers. One such group was organised from the former leaders of the university youth movements, and some members of the government supported them.

The founders of Mester Film Kft.[25] – Miklós Mester, László Barla and Miklós Szalontai Kiss, who will be introduced later – also acquainted themselves with politics in these movements. Mester was Chairman of SzEFHE[26] for a year, Barla and Kiss were Chairman and Secretary General of MEFHOSz.[27] Mester considered Klára Zsindely-Tüdős[28] as his political mentor, and in 1938 they

24 Ibid.

25 The press spread the Mesterfilm Kft. name, which the company came to call itself most of the time in their own advertisements, on posters, and in film reels as well, when they were not using their logo; therefore, from here onwards we will also refer to it this way, instead of using the official name.

26 The following five people began organising the Association of Szekler University and College Students (Hungarian abbreviation: SZEFHE) in 1920–1921: Antal Incze, Áron János, Mihály Kolosváry-Borcsa, Gergely Sándor Zakariás and György Csanády. In Transylvania, young people, whose mother tongue was Hungarian and did not know Romanian very well and wanted a university degree were driven abroad, primarily to Hungary, which meant leaving their homeland. The aim of the association was to keep alive and strengthen a sense of belonging among Transylvanian Hungarian university students. In 1925, the Szekler Cultural House was established on Liszt Ferenc Square, which was later renamed the Szekler House. The house hosted exhibitions and literary events. The association published books, it had a paper published weekly or fortnightly called Új Élet [New Life]. After 1945 the communist authorities dissolved the organisation.

27 Magyar Egyetemi és Főiskolai Hallgatók Országos Szövetsége [National Association of University and College Students, Hungarian abbreviation: MEFHOSZ]. The association of university and college student organisations was founded in 1920. It united support, self-training, scientific and religious organisations. It was disbanded in 1945.

28 Klára Zsindely-Tüdős (1895–1980), applied artist, costume designer. From 1915 she studied at the School of Applied Arts (today: MOME), then at the ethnography faculty of the Budapest University as István Györffy's student. From 1925 she was the designer and head of the costume workshop at the Hungarian Royal Opera House. In 1938 she married Ferenc Zsindely, state secretary, later minister (her second marriage). She participated in the movement for exploring villages and supported the establishment of the István Györffy College. From 1944 she held the position of Chairwoman of the National Reformist Women's Association at the request of László Ravasz. She founded Új Magyar Asszony

organised the Hungarian art exhibition in Transylvania together, which was to open on the first day of the following year. Klára Tüdős' second husband, Ferenc Zsindely[29] was then State Secretary of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. In 1939, during the election campaign he asked Mester through his wife to accept candidacy to become a Member of Parliament.[30] Later, Zsindely held the position of State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office under the Teleki government. István Antal[31], who worked in the press of the university youth movements during the 1920s and was State Secretary of Justice at the time, may have also belonged to this group, which might have been one of the groups which – upon considering the government expectations – sensed that with the social restructurings of the time a new need and skill was emerging to capture the exemplary events of Hungarian history and the issues of Hungarian fate on film. The cooperation is indirectly supported by several later facts as

[New Hungarian Woman], the newspaper of the Association. After the Arrow Cross Party's accession to power she hid Jews in her villa in Buda and the refugee home she operated in the Darányi House. In 1949, the communist authorities banned her from working at the women's association. In 1950 all her wealth and properties were confiscated, and she was deported together with her husband.

29 Dr Ferenc Zsindely de Borosjenő (1891–1963), lawyer, writer, minister. State Secretary of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education from 1938, State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office from 1939, Minister of Trade and Transport from 1943 until the German occupation of the country. From 1931 until 1944 he was a Member of Parliament. In the 1950s his property was confiscated, and he was deported together with his wife.

30 For more detail, see Kása 2018.

31 Dr István Antal (1896–1975) lawyer, minister. He graduated from the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at Budapest University. In the 1920s he worked in the press of the university youth movements; his lawyer's office was mainly tasked with the legal representation of Gyula Gömbös. In the first Gömbös government, he led the Press Department of the Prime Minister's Office, while in the second Gömbös government he was State Secretary of Policies at the Ministry of Justice. He was subsequently state secretary in a number of governments. He was the Minister of State Security and Propaganda in the Kállay government, and Minister of Justice, Religion and Public Education in the Sztójay government. Between 1935 and 1944 he was a Member of Parliament. Following Szálasi's accession to power he was arrested and detained in Sopronkőhida. He was released in exchange for his resignation as a Member of Parliament. He left for Germany, in the autumn of 1945 where he was taken prisoner by the Americans. At the request of the Hungarian government, he was extradited as a war criminal in October 1945 and transported to Budapest where he was sentenced to death. Zoltán Tildy granted him clemency, and thus the "People's Court" gave him a life sentence to forced labour as a main punishment.

well. In the Sztójay government, Mester and Antal became State Secretaries of the Ministry of Religion and Education and they supervised the issues of film together. Tüdős was the costume designer for several Mesterfilm productions.

The company itself, Mesterfilm Kft., was established in April 1938 by Dr Miklós Mester, Dr László Barla and Miklós Szalontai Kiss. The three owners of the same age were working together in the university youth movements and presumably were good friends as well.

Dr Miklós Mester was born in a Szekler farming family in Rugonfalva (today: Rugăneşti Romania) in Udvarhely County in 1906. He passed his secondary school final exams at the Unitarian Grammar School in Székelykeresztúr, attended university in Budapest and received his PhD in Central-European history in 1937. He was one of the founders and then an active member of the left-wing literature society operating between the two World Wars, which was named after Miklós Bartha, also born in Rugonfalva and previously a well-known figure in the area. From 1931, he was Chairman of the SzEFHE. In 1939, he was elected Member of Parliament for the Party of Hungarian Life by secret ballot in the Ráckeve constituency. After Béla Imrédy left the government in 1940, Imrédy established the Party of Hungarian Renewal, which Mester also joined, as he believed in the agrarian reform promised by the party. Thus, he continued his parliamentary career as an opposition politician. After the German occupation, he became State Secretary of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education in the Sztójay government with the endorsement of the Transylvania Party and prominent figures of Hungarian cultural life, a position which he retained in the Lakatos government as well. Following the Arrow Cross Party's rise to power he went into hiding. After 1945 he was arrested multiple times and was then deported. He could not continue his work as a historian even after 1956 and was only able to take low-paid, manual office jobs. The communist regime considered him an enemy of the state until 1987, when he was deleted from the register, but only with regard to his age. He died in Budapest in 1989.[32]

32 For more details, see Kása 2018.

Dr László Barla was born in 1905 in Pécs. He received a doctorate in political science in 1936 and later became president of MEFHOSz. He was the leader of the rental department of the Hunnia Film Studio from 1937 and managing director of Mesterfilm Kft. from 1938 until its termination. In 1940, he was a member of the organising committee of the 2nd National Film Week, and from 1943 a member of the Supervisory Board of the Magyar Írók Filmje Rt. He worked on the production of more than twenty films as a producer or in various other roles. In 1945 he moved to Pécs and lived there through the 1950s. His time of death is unknown.

Miklós Szalontai Kiss was born in Békéssámson in 1906. He studied law at university, and was Secretary General and then Chief Financial Officer of MEFHOSz. In 1937, he trained himself to become a production manager. He was the managing director and permanent production manager of Mesterfilm Kft. from 1938 until its termination. Between 1939 and 1940, he was the managing director of Takács Film Kft., and a member of the Hungarian Film Export Cooperative from 1942. He was one of the organisers of the first Hungarian film festival, the National Film Week in 1939. He was the publisher of the magazine produced specifically for the occasion at the Palotaszálló hotel in Lillafüred. After 1945 he was banned from working in the film industry by the authorities. He was supervisor of economic affairs in the National Centre of the Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party (Hungarian acronym: FkgP) from 1945 until the party's dissolution in 1950. Later, he worked in state farms and finally as a chief accountant. He died in Budapest in 1974.

Their joint company was registered at the Royal Court of Budapest under registration number Cg 40161/3. 28242/1. on 11 May 1938.[33] The company's managing directors were Dr László Barla and Miklós Szalontai Kiss. It had a share capital of ten thousand pengős: four thousand under Miklós Mester's name, and three thousand under each managing director's name. The company was supported with a loan: the National Independent Entrepreneurs Fund[34]

33 Központi Értesitő, 9 June 1938, p. 410.

34 A financial fund established by Decree 4.600. M.E. of 1937 on reasonable loans to support the launch of independent careers in economic and intellectual sectors of the industry.

contributed forty thousand pengős, while Fritz Eisler (?), a Jewish film-maker who emigrated from Germany, provided one hundred thousand pengős to help start the business.[35]

Between 1938 and 1944, either alone or in cooperation with other film production companies, Mesterfilm produced twenty-two films. 1938: *Uz Bence* [Bence Uz], *Szegény gazdagok* [Poor Rich], *Nincsenek véletlenek* [There are No Accidents]. 1939: *A nőnek mindig sikerül* [The Woman Always Succeeds], *Jöjjön elsején* [Come on the First of the Month], *Semmelweis*. 1940: *Egy csók és más semmi* [Just a Kiss, Nothing More], *Dankó Pista* [Pista Dankó], *A szerelem nem szégyen* [Love is Nothing to be Ashamed of]. 1941: *András* [Andrew], *Havasi napsütés* [Sunshine in the Mountains], *Haláltánc* [Danse Macabre]. 1942: *Fráter Lóránd* [Friar Lóránd], *Őrségváltás* [Changing of the Guard], *Férfihűség* [Male Fidelity], *Gyávaság* [Cowardice], *Négylovas hintó* [Four-horse Carriage]. 1943: *Makacs Kata* [Stubborn Kata], *Sziámi macska* [Siamese Cat]. 1944: *Boldoggá teszlek* [I will Make You Happy], *Fiú, vagy leány* [Boy or Girl?]. Their film entitled *Tengerparti randevú* [Rendezvous on the Beach] was produced with Bulgarian cooperation in 1943. Their most often employed actors and actresses were Zita Szeleczky,[36] Bea Goll,[37] Antal Páger, Pál Jávor[38] and Gyula Csortos.[39]

35 ÁBTL 3.1.9. V-91291. 4.

36 For biographical details, see Kása 2020b.

37 Bea (Beatrix) Goll (1927–2014), actress, dancer. She played her first role at the age of 14 and appeared in seven films altogether. In 1948 she emigrated to Switzerland, became a photo model and a ballet instructor.

38 Pál Jávor (original surname: Jermann) (1902–1959), actor. He attended the Academy of Dramatic Arts (today: University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest, SZFE) and received his diploma at the school of the National Association of Actors and Actresses in 1922. Following a number of contracts in Budapest and the countryside, he was a member of the National Theatre from 1935. He acted in the last silent film, and by the mid-1930s he had become the greatest star and male idol of his period. He appeared in 73 films. In 1946, he emigrated to the USA. He returned to Hungary in 1957.

39 Gyula Csortos (1883–1945), actor. After graduating from the Academy of Dramatic Arts he performed in several theatres of larger cities around the country and then in Budapest. From 1924 until his death he was a member, and then an artist of the National Theatre. From 1912 he appeared in 80 films altogether.

After being elected a Member of Parliament, Mester sold his business share in 1940 to Barla and Szalontai Kiss in a fifty-fifty ratio. Thus, the two managing directors became the sole owners.[40]

Of the nine films they produced in the period 1938–1940, we describe three in more detail, as they are closely related to the topic of our study.

Mesterfilm Kft. made its first film in 1938 based on József Nyírő's book entitled *Uz Bence* published in 1933. We found mention of the fact that the company was established for the adaptation of this novel in one of the period's papers.[41] There may have been several reasons why the company managers chose *Uz Bence*. Mester, the majority owner of the company, had roots in Szeklerland, which might have contributed to the decision. His birthplace, Rugonfalva, was only 20 km away from Nyírő's residence at the time, the county capital Székelyudvarhely (today: Odorheiu Secuiesc, Romania). No reference could be found in Mester's autobiography[42] as to when the historian and the writer first met. In 1937, Nyírő published a glowing review of Mester's recently published work *Az autonóm Erdély* [Autonomous Transylvania] in the Keleti Újság [Eastern Paper].[43] Presumably, they built a strong friendship, because it was in this period that Mester married Valéria Végh and asked Nyírő to be his best man at the wedding.[44] This may have been the reason why the writer ultimately chose Mesterfilm from the long queue of production companies eager to adapt his novel. According to other media reports, the idea to start the adaptation of Nyírő's novels to the screen with *Uz Bence* came from János Bingert, Chief Executive Officer of the Hunnia Film Studio,[45] because

40 Due to the lack of resources, we cannot judge whether Miklós Mester played a role in the company's operations after selling his share.

41 Film készül Nyirő József Uz Bencéjéből [József Nyírő's work Uz Bence to be made into a film]. Brassói Lapok, 29 May 1938, p. 4.

42 Mester 2012.

43 Nyirő, J.: Mit követelt a román nép a magyar uralom alatt? [What did Romanians demand under Hungarian rule?]. Keleti Ujság, 7 February 1937, p. 6.

44 Nyirő József – Mester Miklós esküvői tanuja [József Nyírő – Bestman at Miklós Mester's Wedding]. Keleti Ujság, 5 May 1938, p. 6.

45 Dr János Bingert (1894–1954), Chief Executive Officer. After acquiring a PhD in political sciences and military service in World War I, he was employed by the Ministry of Interior where he worked at the Police Department. He became the rapporteur of cinema and film affairs in 1925. From 1926 he was the Secretary of the Film Industry Fund. In 1928, the

"with its excellent characters and exceptionally interesting theme, it is suitable in every aspect to grab the attention of cinema-going audiences, and it also provides extensive opportunities to capture the wonderful Szekler world of Transylvania, which Nyírő depicts in his novels and plays in such a captivating manner."[46]

The concept thus complied with all of the state's cultural-political expectations. A series of short folk stories from a Transylvanian writer would be adapted for cinema by a newly established, Christian company. The group of owners had ties to the government and during their careers so far they had conducted socially beneficial activities. The reception of Nyírő's plays that had previously premiered and were still running at the theatres in Budapest at the time was a guarantee for success. And this made the anticipated profits all the more probable. All in all, it seemed an ideal film project, and indeed it fulfilled all the expectations.

The renowned, experienced group of filmmakers and a selection of the most successful and celebrated actors and actresses of the time foreshadowed its artistic qualities and excellent production. Attila Orbók[47] was asked to write the script, Jenő Csepreghy[48] was the director, István Eiben[49] the

fund bought the production site of the Corvin film studio, and the government set up Hunnia Filmgyár Rt. to operate it. Bingert became a member of the Board of Directors, the Administrative and Trade Director, then from 1930 the Managing Director. Under his leadership, the Hunnia Film Studio was developed to European levels and obtained a leading role for Hungarian sound film production in Central Europe. From autumn 1940, he was Chief Executive Officer of the studio, in March 1944 he resigned and enlisted in the army. At the end of 1944, he emigrated to Argentina and settled in Buenos Aires.

46 Jávor Pál játssza Uz Bencét filmen [Pál Jávor Plays Bence Uz in Film]. Esti Ujság, 25 May 1938, p. 8.

47 Dr Attila Orbók (1887–1964), writer, journalist. Obtained a doctorate in law at the University of Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania) in 1910. From 1912 a reporter of the daily newspaper Magyarország [Hungary]. Member of the National Assembly in 1920–1922, later a journalist. He wrote a number of novels, plays, film scripts, cabaret shows and translated several dramas.

48 Jenő Csepreghy (1912–1978), director. He studied at the University of Technology and worked in film production in Hollywood from 1933. He later became assistant director at the Metro film studio and returned to Hungary in 1937. Two years later, he established Csepreghy Filmforgalmi és Kereskedelmi Kft. with his brother. From 1940 he lived in Portugal and then emigrated to the USA, where he worked under the name John Shepridge.

49 István Eiben (1902–1958), cinematographer. After secondary school, he started his career as a laboratory technician in 1916. From 1919 he was an independent cinematographer and then became a permanent associate of the Corvin and Hunnia Film Studios. From 1952

cinematographer and Szalontai Kiss the production manager. The main characters were portrayed by Pál Jávor, László Szilassy[50] and Bella Bordy,[51] but they also contracted Sándor Toma, also known as "Pufi",[52] from Kolozsvár, who was a popular actor.

The new ways in which the film was introduced to the markets is noteworthy, including publicity for its screening with an effective advertising campaign. Newspaper reports prepared future viewers from the beginning of shooting until the premiere, thus catching their attention. For example, the appearances of the actor Pufi Tompa from Kolozsvár at the shooting became newsworthy.[53] The best advertising was the leaked details and conditions of the acting role of "Mr Kántor", a real-life bear. On the way to an external shooting location in Lillafüred, a Hunnia Film Studio van drifted off the road near a bend and rolled over: several people were injured, but the "film-star bear" was unharmed. "The strong metal cage withheld the weight of the falling van."[54]. Newspapers reported on "the kindest movie star" gaining 15

until his death he taught cinematography at the College of Dramatic and Film Arts. He was awarded the Kossuth Prize and the title of Merited Artist. He participated in the production of 150 films.

50 László Szilassy (soproni Szabó) (1908–1972), actor. He was a celebrated film star of the end of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. He acted in 42 films. In 1945 he fled the country and lived in Argentina and Brazil. His films were banned in Hungary.

51 Bella Bordy (Izabella Bordi) (1909–1978), actress, dance artist. From 1924 until 1965 she was a member of the Opera House. From 1965 she taught stage motion technique for opera singers in Vienna and Zurich. Between 1938 and 1944 she acted in 14 films, mostly in lead roles.

52 Sándor Tompa (1903–1969), actor. He studied at the Medical Faculty of the University of Kolozsvár, and simultaneously attended the acting school of Miklós Izsó. From 1923, he performed at the Hungarian Theatre in Kolozsvár for 17 years and then in Budapest. From 1941 until 1944 he was at the National Theatre in Kolozsvár and finally at the National Theatre in Budapest from 1945 until his death. His nickname was "Pufi" [Puffy]. He was awarded the Kossuth Prize and the title of Merited Artist.

53 Két filmszerep eljátszására szerződtették Budapesten Tompa „Pufi"-t, akit a Nemzeti Szinház és a magyar rádió is meghivott. ['Pufi' Tompa invited by the National Theatre and the Hungarian Radio and contracted for two film roles in Budapest]. Keleti Ujság, 25 July 1938, p. 4.

54 A filmsztár-medvének nem ártott meg az autószerencsétlenség [Film-star bear unharmed in car accident]. Esti Kurir, 25 August 1938, p. 4.

kilos during the shooting,[55] and his photo was published before the film's premiere.[56]

The film was received exceptionally well by the press, both during production and after the premiere. Emília B. Csűrös[57] wrote about shooting at the film studio: "Nevertheless, that strange, round lamp was the moon, which poured its cold light over the pine trees of Transylvania the same way as it did on us, and while we were wandering among the trees of an artificial wild forest, it might as well have spread a silver veil on the illuminating, beautiful forehead of József Nyírő under the real pine trees of Udvarhelyszék, to help the author dream up another miracle for us – his nation, the pine-tree children raised among boulders. To bring forth another wellspring of beauty and art."[58] According to a critic writing for the Esti Kurir [Evening Courier]: "It is as if Pál Jávor has only now reached the peak of his success with this role, where he finally discarded the sometimes expertly tailored tail-coat, at other times the tightly-woven Attila of the hero of clichéd comedies and sugary love stories, and has now jumped in front of us and stood up on a mountain top with a loud shout like Bence Uz would. We do not think Pál Jávor will ever have a more beautiful role than this [...] Mester Film and Hunnia have every right to be proud of their first, exemplary production."[59]

The film premiered on Friday, 18 November 1938. It was right at this time, not long after the repatriation of the Felvidék (Upper Hungary) that the Federation of Cinemas took stock of the movie theatres in the reunited territories and found 30 in a functional state. Thus, *Uz Bence* was shown in cinemas in Upper

55 Látogatás Uz Bencénél – a filmgyárban [Visiting Bence Uz – in the Film Studio]. Keleti Ujság, 19 September 1938, p. 10.

56 Négyszemközt Uz Bencével [Face to Face with Bence Uz]. Színházi Élet, 1938. No. 46, pp. 46–47 and No. 47, p. 67.

57 Emília Bérczes Istvánné Csűrös (1897–1970), authoress of youth literature. She obtained her certificate at the college in Nagyenyed. She became a member of the editorial staff of Elek Benedek's children magazine Cimbora and then of Új Cimbora. Her children's and youth books started to appear from 1930.

58 Látogatás Uz Bencénél – a filmgyárban [Visiting Bence Uz – in the Film Studio]. Keleti Ujság, 19 September 1938, p. 10.

59 Uz Bence. Esti Kurir, 20 November 1938, p. 10.

Hungary almost at the same time as it premiered in Hungary. One month later, Szalontai Kiss made the following statement: "The first representative film of Mester Film was *Uz Bence*, which premiered right on the evening before the reunification of the Felvidék. It was the first Hungarian film, which was sent out on a glorious tour in the cities and towns of the Felvidék. Received with indescribable enthusiasm and joy everywhere, *Uz Bence* brought a totally new voice, the voice of serious issues into Hungarian film production."[60]

The first Hungarian film festival, known as the National Film Week, was organised between 3 and 11 July 1939 in Lillafüred. Minister of Religion and Public Education Bálint Hóman,[61] Minister of Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer[62] and Minister of Industry Antal Kunder[63] undertook the patronship. The event was chaired by Ferenc Zsindely, State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, while the co-chairman was the younger son of the regent,

60 Filmhős lesz Dankó Pista [Pista Dankó Becomes a Film Hero]. Esti Kurir, 25 December 1938, p. 19.

61 Dr Bálint Hóman (1885–1951), historian, university professor. From 1918 correspondence member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, regular member from 1929 and director from 1933. Minister of Religion and Public Education between 1932 and 1938 and between 1939 and 1942. He was stripped of his membership of the academy in 1945 and was sentenced to life in prison. He died in prison in Vác due to bad conditions and torture. In 2015, the Metropolitan Court posthumously acquitted him of war crimes due to lack of a crime.

62 vitéz Dr Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer (1881–1948), County Head, Minister of Interior, Member of the Upper Chamber, graduated from law university, County Head of Baranya and Pécs from 1921 and also of Somogy county from 1925. Minister of Interior between 1931 and 1935 and between 1938 and 1944 under several governments. From 1936 a Member of the Upper Chamber. From 1939 a representative of the Party of Hungarian Life. Following the occupation of Hungary, the Gestapo arrested him and deported him to a concentration camp in Germany.

63 Antal Kunder (1900–1968), captain in the Hungarian Armed Forces, minister. He graduated at the Ludovika Academy, then obtained a mechanical engineering diploma at the Technical University of Budapest and became a captain in the Military Engineering Faculty. He was a Member of Parliament for Esztergom with the Party of Hungarian Life in the 1938–1939 and the 1939–1944 cycle. In 1938, he was selected State Secretary then Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Transport in the Imrédy government and was simultaneously appointed Minister of Industry. He was the Minister of Trade and Transport for the Sztójay government in 1944. In the Sztójay trial, the People's Court sentenced him to death as a war criminal: the sentence was changed to forced labour for life by clemency by the President of the Republic Zoltán Tildy. He was released in 1956 and emigrated to his family in Brazil.

Miklós Horthy, Jr., Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.[64] Twelve films were awarded in the feature film category, two of which were produced by Mesterfilm Kft. *Uz Bence* received an award for having the most Hungarian propaganda effect, and *Szegény gazdagok* was named as the film having the most literary merit by Miklós Horthy, Jr.[65]

Mesterfilm's solemn historical biopic *Semmelweis* was finished in the same autumn. The idea came from Szalontai Kiss, who said "After the American film about Pasteur, the German film about Koch, let us make a film about the Hungarian medical hero, too! All the more so, since Ignác Semmelweis' life was much more novel-like and 'cinematographic' than the life of the French doctor Pasteur or the German Koch."[66] The film was produced with complete historical fidelity. The makers "thoroughly reviewed the life story of the great doctor, all of his works published in Jena, and his private letters left behind. They dug up every drawing and print of the period about the places where Semmelweis spent time during his life. Based on these images of the period, in the Hunnia Film Studio they reconstructed the University of Vienna as it looked 100 years earlier when Semmelweis studied there. Similarly, they recreated the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Clinic in Vienna, where he had worked as an assistant professor. And the old Rókus Hospital in Pest, where he headed the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Department. The streets of Vienna, Buda and Pest where he took his walks with a face gradually growing grimmer and grimmer, as well as the meeting room of the Vienna Medical Congress, where insanity finally overcame Semmelweis".[67] The film was first screened to professionals at the General Meeting of the Federation of Cinemas in the Capitol Cinema in Kassa (today: Košice, Slovakia) on 20 December 1939,[68] and wider audiences could see the film from January 1940.

64 A Filmhét vezérkara [General Staff of the Film Week]. Magyar Film, 1939. 15. p.4.

65 Closing speech of Ministry Department Advisor Dr László Balogh. Magyar Film, 1939. 18. pp. 5–6.

66 1838: Budáról Bécsbe indul a postakocsi… [1838: Stagecoach Departing From Buda To Vienna...]. Nemzeti Sport, 14 November 1939, p. 6.

67 Ibid.

68 Jelentkezés a kassai közgyűlésre [Registration for the General Meeting in Kosice]. Magyar Film, 1939. 43. p. 5.

In the meantime, collecting the material and writing the script for *Dankó Pista* started in early 1939. Together with film director László Kalmár,[69] company directors Barla, Szalontai Kiss and scriptwriter Sándor Nagymihály[70] travelled to Szeged, where the protagonist of the film had spent most of his life. They were looking for living people of his age to bear witness. They laid a wreath at the statue of Pista Dankó in Szeged, and Mayor Dr József Pálffy[71] met the team.[72] But at the same time, this and the newspaper reports about the trip were already part of a well-structured plan to introduce the film to the broader public. Szalontai Kiss explained to the press why they had chosen this particular subject: "The famous Hungarian songwriter had a very romantic life indeed. His diary entries as well as the novelistic biographies written of his life later all provide evidence of this. Pista Dankó was not a gypsy, but nevertheless he built up a great reputation for Hungarian melodies and traditional songs with his violin, mainly, of course, for the songs which were created in his own head. He travelled the whole world and played before every European head of state of his day and age. For instance, he was a favoured guest in the court of the Russian tsar."[73]

Shooting began in April 1940 at the Hunnia studios with Pál Jávor in the leading role. By June, the film was completed. Advertisements prepared viewers for the screening as the sensation of the film week, which was a spot-on prophecy. The films of Mesterfilm were received with a shower of awards at the 2nd National Film Week. The competition took place between 22 June and 1 July 1940 in Lillafüred at the Palota Hotel. Together with Minister of

69 László Kalmár (1900–1980), director, scriptwriter. In 1916 he was employed by the film studio as an extra. From 1919 he was a trainee, then a caption drawing artist, editor, production assistant and assistant director. From 1938 he worked as a director and wrote film scripts as well. He was awarded the Kossuth Prize and the title of Merited Artist.

70 Sándor Nagymihály (1897–?), writer, scriptwriter.

71 József Pálfy (1874–1944), mayor. After obtaining a degree in law, he started his career in the public administration of Szeged as a notary. Later he became police commissioner, then chairman of the board of guardians, then mayor from 1934.

72 Utazás Dankó Pista körül. [A Journey Round Pista Dankó]. Esti Kurir, 27 January 1939, p. 10.

73 Filmhős lesz Dankó Pista [Pista Dankó to become a film hero]. Esti Kurir, 25 December 1938, p. 19.

Religion and Public Education Bálint Hóman, State Secretary István Fáy[74] undertook the role of chief patrons. The Chairman was Ferenc Kiss, President and Ministerial Commissioner[75] of the Chamber of Theatre and Film Art.[76] Twenty-one awards were given, of which the No. 1 of the Ministry of Culture, which can be considered the main award, was presented to *Dankó Pista*, a joint production of Hunnia and Mesterfilm. *Semmelweis*, another Hunnia-Mesterfilm production, received the Award of the Chamber. *Dankó Pista* won two more prizes from Agfa Film and Kodak Film. Mesterfilm was also awarded a certificate of appreciation for the work of the set designer of *Semmelweis* and *Dankó Pista* and the directorial work in the film *Come on the First of the Month*. In the category of film actors and actresses, Pál Jávor and Margit Lukács were awarded a certificate of appreciation for their roles in *Dankó Pista*, Antal Páger and Ida Turay for their performances in *Come on the First of the Month*, and Tivadar Uray for his performance in *Semmelweis*.[77]

Dankó Pista not only garnered awards and social recognition for the producers, it also generated exceptionally large box office revenues. The report

74 István Fáy de Fáj (1881–1953), County Head, Member of Parliament, State Secretary. He completed his university studies in Budapest and Berlin. From 1902 he held several county-level positions. From 1920 he was sub-prefect then the County Head of Csanád County. From 1939 a Member of Parliament for the Party of Hungarian Life, and from this year until the German occupation he was State Secretary of Religion and Public Education and State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office under the Lakatos government. In 1945, he emigrated to the West and settled in Argentina.

75 Ferenc Kiss (1893–1978), actor, director. From 1919 until 1927 a member of the National Theatre, from 1927 until 1930 of the Hungarian Theatre, and from 1930 until 1945 again member of the National Theatre. From 1937 until 1944 he was the director of the Academy of Dramatic Arts, between 1939 and 1942 the Chairman of the Chamber of Theatre and Film Art. From 20 October 1944 he was the director of the National Theatre, from 2 November the Ministerial Commissioner of Theatre and Film Arts. From 1935 he was the holder of the Corvin Wreath, and in 1937 he became a permanent member of the National Theatre. In December 1944, he fled to Western Hungary and then to Germany, but the German authorities extradited him to Hungary. In November 1945 the People's Court sentenced him to eight years in prison as a war criminal, which he served in full. After his release, he worked as a night guard and a slaughterhouse worker. From 1956 he was allowed to act on stage again. He retired in 1961.

76 II. Nemzeti Filmhét Lillafüreden. [Second National Film Week in Lillafüred]. Magyar Film, 1940. 25. p. 4.

77 A filmverseny díjai [Awards of the Film Competition]. Magyar Film, 1940. 27. p. 4.

of the Board of Directors of Hunnia Filmgyár Rt. highlighted the fact that "from among the films produced by Mester Film Kft. in 1940, '*Dankó Pista*' was a smashing success both artistically and as a business venture, which is demonstrated by the sale of the film to several foreign markets".[78] According to the report, the next year *Dankó Pista* generated the highest revenue for Hunnia (the Film Placement Office, i.e. its film rental department, was the distributor of the film), as "the film generated a result for the company that no Hungarian film had done before".[79] The distribution rights of the film were bought by Sweden, Latvia, Finland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Italy, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and Iran even during the production, well before it was completed. Sixty thousand pengős had already been generated by such sales before the report was published. Moreover, it appeared clear that Germany would buy the film as well.[80] Bulgaria and Yugoslavia offered prices which were unprecedented for the foreign sale of Hungarian films at the time.[81] We could not find information on the budget of *Dankó Pista*, but it may have been similar to that of the *Semmelweis* film, which was planned for 133,500 pengős, and was actually produced on a budget of 134,589 pengős.[82] In other words, the foreign sales up to that point had already covered for almost half of the production costs.

Following the successes at the 2nd National Film Week, it was natural that one of the two films representing Hungary at the Biennale in Venice starting on 1 September 1940 would be *Dankó Pista*, which was warmly received in the Italian reviews.[83]

78 Report of the Board of Directors of the Hunnia Filmgyár Rt. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [Hungarian National Archives] (hereinafter: MNL OL) Z 869 – 2 – 3.

79 MNL OL Z 869 – 2 – 13.

80 A „Dankó Pista" és a külföld. ["Dankó Pista" and foreign distribution]. Magyar Film, 1940. 29. p. 9.

81 A „Dankó Pistá"-t „lábon" vette meg a külföld. [Dankó Pista bought "in progress" by foreign distributors]. Magyar Film, 1940. 17. p. 10.

82 MNL OL Z 1126 – 1939 – 102

83 Olasz-német filmhét Velencében. [Italian-German Film Week in Venice] Magyar Film, 1940. 37. p. 4., Magyar filmek sikere Velencében. [The Success of Hungarian Films in Venice]. Idem, 38. pp. 4–7, Olasz visszhang a magyar filmekről [Italian Reception of Hungarian Films]. Idem, 39. pp. 5–6.

The general public was able to first see *Dankó Pista* on 16 January at the premiere held in the Royal Apollo Film Theatre. At the time, Hungarian sound film production closed its first 10 years, and the profession celebrated the occasion with the premiere screening of the 200th Hungarian film. *Dankó Pista* was hailed as the jubilee film. The solemnity of the gala screening was enhanced by the appearance of vitéz Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya with his younger son, Ambassador of Hungary to Brazil, Miklós Horthy, Jr. The Regent was received by Minister of Culture Bálint Hóman, Minister of Industry József Varga[84] and Minister of Finance Lajos Reményi-Schneller.[85] After the national anthem, one of the lead actors of the film, "Pufi" Tompa, announced the performances preceding the screening. The first performer was Margit Lukács singing *Cigánydal* [Gypsy Song] by Mihály Babits. László Balogh, Ministry Department Advisor and Secretary General of the National Film Committee,[86] praised the 10 years of sound film production and the 200th Hungarian sound film in his speech. Next came Erzsi Simor reciting one of the most Hungarian poems

84 Dr József Varga (1891–1956), chemical engineer, university professor, Member of Parliament, minister. From 1939 a representative of the Party of Hungarian Life, State Secretary of Industry, then Minister of Industry and simultaneously Minister of Trade and Transport until 1943. In 1932 he was appointed a correspondence member and then a regular member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1942. Awarded the Corvin Wreath in 1942 and the Kossuth Prize in 1950 and 1952.

85 Dr Lajos Reményi-Schneller (1892–1946), financial expert, Finance Minister. Graduated with a degree in law at Budapest University. He was appointed Finance Minister in 1938, an office which he held in the Darányi, Imrédy, Teleki, Bárdossy, Kállay, Sztójay, Lakatos and Szálasi governments as well. He fled from the Russians to Germany, and was later extradited as a war criminal upon the request of Hungary. In the Sztójay trial he was sentenced to death by the People's Court and was executed.

86 Dr László Balogh (1898–1954), Ministry Department Advisor. Graduated from the Faculty of Humanities of Budapest University, received his doctorate degree in Hungarian Cultural History in 1922. From 1934 he was the rapporteur of film affairs at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, from 1938 he received the title of department advisor. Following this he was sent to the Prime Minister's Office for two years. From 1940 General Secretary of the Hungarian National Film Committee, then head of the department for the affairs of the Hungarian National Film Committee in the Ministry of Culture. From 1942 he was the rapporteur of the Art Branch of the Ministry, later Deputy Head of the Department and a member of the Board of Directors of the Hunnia Film Studio. In 1945, he was arrested, and in 1946 the "People's Court" sentenced him to four years in prison. Following his release, he was deported in 1951.

about Pista Dankó by Endre Ady. Pál Jávor sang songs from the acclaimed songwriter with gypsy music accompaniment. Eventually, the time came to watch the film.[87] A brief summary of the premiere was broadcast in the 883rd episode of *Magyar Világhíradó* [Hungarian World News].[88] "Following the end of the gala premiere a group of roughly seventy invited guests rode on carriages to the villa of the Mesterfilm company in Thököli street – reported the well-informed journalist of the professional journal of the Hungarian Chamber of Theatre and Film Art – where the elegant assemblage of guests spent a night of celebration, crowning the day of the big event in a deserving manner. The two directors of Mesterfilm, Szalontai Kiss and Barla, played the hosts and provided the entertaining atmosphere for their guests."[89]

Looking at the timeline more closely, *Dankó Pista* was not in fact the 200th sound film. As mentioned above, it premiered at the 2nd Hungarian Film Week – between 22 June and 1 July 1940 – which means it was already finished by then. In his book, which is biased in many respects, Nemeskürty presents *Dankó Pista* as the 171st Hungarian sound film.[90] *Magyar Film* [Hungarian Film], the weekly journal of the Film Chamber reported, that according to the records of the Hunnia Film Studio and the Hungarian Film Office, production had finished or was underway for 219 feature films in 1940. The contradiction was resolved by noting that "shorter or longer periods may elapse between the shooting and the premiere of a film in various cases, this is how it can be that *Dankó Pista*, which was produced in the middle of the year, was celebrated as the 200th Hungarian film by the profession at the premiere".[91] This indicates that

87 Kötelez a múlt [Bound by the past]. Magyar Film, 1941. 3. p. 1. A hazai film ünnepe. „Dankó Pista": a 200-ik magyar film. A Hunnia-Mester jubiláris filmjének díszbemutatója a Royal Apollóban [Celebrating Hungarian cinema, "Dankó Pista" the 200th Hungarian film. Gala Premiere of the Hunnia-Mester Jubilee Film in the Royal Apollo]. Idem, pp. 2–3.

88 http://filmhiradokonline.hu/watch.php?id=4092

89 A hazai film ünnepe. „Dankó Pista": a 200-ik magyar film. A Hunnia-Mester jubiláris filmjének díszbemutatója a Royal Apollóban [Celebrating Hungarian cinema, "Dankó Pista", the 200th Hungarian film. Gala Premier of the Hunnia-Mester Jubilee Film at the Royal Apollo]. Magyar Film, 1941. 3. p. 3.

90 Nemeskürty 1983, p. 712.

91 Hány magyar film készült eddig? [How many Hungarian films were made so far?]. Magyar Film, 1941. 2. pp. 3–4.

acknowledging and awarding *Dankó Pista* as the 200th Hungarian sound film was a cultural policy decision, which formulated recommendations for future film productions at the same time.

Why was the film *Dankó Pista* highlighted – naturally from an existing selection – as the model to follow? To understand this, we have to go back to the 2nd National Film Week, where Ministry Department Advisor László Balogh held a lecture on the relations between society and films. He was searching for the answer to the question: how can you form a certain collective soul, a common conscience, a feeling, an atmosphere in a given community? For this, he deemed film to be an appropriate medium. He mentioned *Dankó Pista* as an example of what this common feeling should be like. He thought at the screening of the film in Lillafüred, that "a collective soul was forming during the projection. *It established the society of Hungarian film. This collective impact of film is to be captured. If you manage to achieve that, you will make a good film, an artistic film, a business film, in a nutshell: a success. Success in itself can never be borne out of external calculations. The sense of duty must be awakened and must be harnessed. And the tools for that are internal, primarily artistic.*"[92]

92 Dr László Balogh: Társadalom és a film [Society and Film]. Magyar Film, 1940. 28. p. 5.

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ARTÚR KÖŐ

ARE LIVING WITNESSES FROM THE REVISION PERIOD STILL TELLING THEIR STORIES, AND IF SO, ABOUT WHAT?

As part of the research programme "23 hours 59 minutes" supported by the Trianon Museum, I conducted a hundred interviews between 2017 and 2018, in which eyewitnesses of the territorial revisions told me about their memories. In addition, we also gathered recollections, diary fragments, photographs and personal items associated with the events that took place between 1938 and 1941. We planned to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon by studying the most beautiful days in Hungary's history in the 20th century and presenting the research results to the public as a response to this tragedy. We could say that in doing so we wished to duly commemorate Trianon in 2020! We visited Upper Hungary, Carpathian Ruthenia, Transylvania and Délvidék [southern part of the Kingdom of Hungary, northern parts of present-day Serbia situated in the Carpathian Basin]. The persecution of Hungarians in the successor states has taken its toll over the last half century, and we found many interviewees within the unjust Trianon borders. However, we were not able to put all the "pieces of the jigsaw" together, as the project genuinely took place at the last minute. There were people who would have been very willing to talk to us, but unfortunately we did not arrive in time. Nevertheless, I can say that I am one of the lucky ones, who – at the last minute – had the chance to talk to some of the people who witnessed the events that occurred between

1938 and 1941. Thus, I had the opportunity to contribute – even if just to a minor extent – to collecting the items for the temporary exhibition entitled "The Hungarian World 1938–1940". Considering how many people thought and said at the beginning of the research programme that we would not be able to present anything new, we produced some significant results. Just to mention two examples: 100 interviews and 1 linear metre of written documentation.

What I am perhaps most proud of is that we found and acquired the protocol on the transfer of Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania). The document was signed by Hungarian Royal Military Colonel Albert Beck representing Hungary, and Victor Pop, Chief Notary for the City, representing Romania. After signing it, the representatives of the Romanian State left the city, which by then had been reattached to Hungary even under public law. One of the protocols was taken to Bucharest, the other one was given to the Hungarian authorities, but a third copy was also drawn up, which was hidden in the estate of a family up until now. Beck was accompanied to the signature of the protocol by Lieutenant István Verebélyi Marssó, who brought the third protocol with him from Transylvania, and it remained in the possession of Verebélyi's son, György Marssó, in Kecskemét until 2017.

We received large quantities of film negatives, among other things relating to the activities and camps organised by the Hungarian Scout Association in 1938. Dearest to me of all is a photograph of Pál Teleki and a photograph of Miklós Horthy from 1938. These are photographs that had never been published before, which were part of the estate of Béla Vezér up until now, preserved by his descendant, Endre Vezér.[1]

The witnesses told us their stories in 2017 and 2018 either in person or through their descendants. Unfortunately, their number is decreasing. As a little teaser, the following text is a recollection which gives us insight into the events that took place in Transylvania in August and September 1940. As far as we know, the memoirs of György Utczás had never been published before. This is how this eyewitness remembered the events:

1 The pictures depicting Pál Teleki and Miklós Horthy are owned by Endre Vezér. The copies of the photographs are owned by the Trianon Museum.

Ephemeral happiness[2]

The army truck stopped in front of my grandmother's house. My grandmother was waiting for us, leaning against the gatepost. Her face was sad. My mother and I got out from next to the driver and went up to her to say goodbye. Tears filled her eyes when she caressed my face. I smiled, and then my grandmother saw the gap where the two incisors were missing from my upper jaw.

"Been kissing the girls?" she said, smiling sadly, "they won't allow you to cross the border like that. You need to stay here at my house till your new teeth come out."

I looked at my mother anxiously, but I soon realised that my grandmother was just joking to make the moment of farewell more bearable.

She kissed me on the cheek, right and left, then my mother too, and sent us on our way, saying:

"May God help you cross the checkpoints safe and sound. There are rumours that the Romanian soldiers are throwing the furniture off the cars if they find out that Hungarians are fleeing from south to north." Then she continued, "I feel we will never see each other again in this life."

"Don't say such a thing, Mum!" said my mother, "Soon Southern Transylvania will be Hungarian too! Take care of yourself, don't work so much – you're not young anymore."

We got back in the cabin of the canvas-topped army truck that had brought the equipment of the Romanian army, which was evacuating Northern Transylvania, to the south. On its way back it was empty, and transported – for a lot of money, of course – the belongings of Transylvanian Hungarians fleeing to the northern territories reattached to Hungary by the Second Vienna Award. The soldier stepped on the accelerator and the vehicle set off towards Torda (today: Turda, Romania) and Kolozsvár.

2 The recollection is owned by the Trianon Museum.

We experienced exciting days and months in the summer of 1940. I was seven and a half years old; I had completed the first grade of elementary school – in Hungarian.

Although Fugad (today: Ciuguzel, Romania) was a purely Romanian village, Count Dániel Bánffy – whose estate and castle were located in this village – no longer employed Romanian farmhands after Trianon, and instead gave the job to Hungarians transported from Szilágy County (today: Sălaj, Romania). He maintained a Hungarian-language school for their children – at his own expense. Although the Kingdom of Romania allowed Hungarians to complete the notary course, they were not allowed to work in villages inhabited by Hungarians. Let this "intruding species" have fewer and fewer intellectuals if it was not able to prevent the Catholic, Reformed or Unitarian priests from living together with their congregations.

My father – as a Hungarian district notary – was assigned to a Romanian village. And so I completed first grade here. Even if I understood little of the excitement, I saw that my parents were excitedly listening to the Budapest I radio – with the volume turned down – at noon every day.

Excitement was then replaced by grief and gloom. The Second Vienna Award left Alsó-Fehér County (today: Comitatul Alba de Jos, Romania) to Romania. My mother cried, and my father stared straight ahead, speechless. All this happened in the notary's flat in secret, as all the neighbours and the population of the whole village were Romanian. On our way to the administrator's office, I saw the Hungarian masons working at the Bánffy estate weeping as they worked.

"Mr Notary, this is awful, unbearable," they said to my father desperately.

A few days later, the Hungarian radio broadcast the entry to Nagyvárad and Szatmárnémet (today: Oradea and Satu Mare, Romania). Ecstatic joy, enthusiasm, thundering applause and euphoric ovation welcomed the entering Hungarian army. At the same time, there was gloom and sobbing, sadness and disillusionment in Southern Transylvania. My mother was crying for days; it was unbearable to be around her. Then one evening my father unexpectedly announced:

"Erzsi, we are going to Kolozsvár to visit the Mandulas. After all, they are your relatives and I hope that I will soon be employed as a notary."

I had already long been asleep by then, so I wasn't aware of anything. It was, therefore, unusual to wake up to my mother's singing. "I am praying for you on red Pentecost day," she sang happily. When she noticed that I had woken up, she came to my bed, and she said with a strict face and in an authoritative but low voice:

"Your father and I decided last night to travel to Kolozsvár to Aunt Erzsi."

"Will we see Hungarian soldiers there too?" I asked happily.

"Yes, but it's a secret, and do not tell your friend Dorin, because if he lets something slip, then we will be taken by the police," she said to me anxiously.

I thought of this possibility in terror and promised not to tell him. Dorin was a little Romanian boy who lived next door; he was about 4 years old, and he would often come over to my place to play. When night was falling and he wanted to go home, I asked him to stay longer. When darkness fell, it was me who sent him home; what's more, I urged him to go. He had to cross a courtyard full of flowers and bushes to get home. When he got to the middle of the yard, the devil appeared on my shoulder and I shouted:

"Dorin, vine dracu!" [Dorin, the devil is coming!]

He then started to run back, crying, and of course this repeated itself often in the evenings. Otherwise, we got along well.

Thursday came – the day when my father had to go to the office of the judge of servitors in Nagyenyed (today: Aiud, Romania) for the notaries' meeting. There were two Hungarian notaries in the district, and it turned out that the other one had left his village and gone north. After the meeting the judge of servitors gestured for my father to stay because he wanted to speak with him.

He received my father in his room, and my father courteously bowed when entering. A superior smile appeared on the face of the judge of servitors, and he said in the sophisticated dialect of the Romanian Old Kingdom:

"Come closer, Domnu Notar [Mr Notary] and take a seat! In today's difficult and chaotic times we need to clarify a few things," he said meaningfully and looked at my father searchingly. "I guess you know what I mean, Mr Notary. Thanks to the Romanian State you have found yourself in a good position, which is financially rewarding as well. Personally I like you, more precisely, you're likeable. I think you are a good worker, loyal to

our state and dutiful. I conclude from all this," here he raised his voice, "that regardless of the current circumstances – that is, the Vienna Award, which is unfair and tragic for us – you will remain a faithful officer of the mutilated Romanian Kingdom, irrespective of your nationality. Give my greetings to the Ladyship."

Walking around his table, smiling, he approached my father in full awareness of assurance; my father, seeing this, suddenly stood up and took a step backward.

"Mr Judge of Servitors," my father started confidently (which was out of character), "I acknowledge that the state has been taking care of me appropriately in terms of finances, but this is also natural in view of my position and work. However, I have been made to feel – intentionally or unintentionally – that I am a second-class citizen in this country, despite the fact I was born here too. My ancestors lived in this city for centuries. I have only been a tolerated "ungur" [Hungarian] among the Romanians. I am sorry, I personally hold you in high regard, but I am primarily Hungarian; I cannot become something else, and I don't even want to. This is a historical moment: I'm going north, and will offer my services to the Hungarian government."

The judge of servitors stopped, the smile frozen on his face.

"Mr Notary, I am deeply disappointed by you, I hope you won't regret it," he said in a sharp voice, threateningly. "We have nothing more to talk about," and he turned his back without shaking hands.

My father found himself standing in the corridor of the Court of Servitors, wiping his sweaty forehead with his handkerchief. In the street, he got on our horse-drawn carriage, he didn't go into any shop – he didn't even buy the usual pralines at Czirner for my mother – and saying the order "Come on, Genius" he slapped our horse and headed to Fugad.

He got home in the early afternoon and immediately told my mother what had happened.

"He should take his greetings elsewhere," replied my mother. "Of course, he didn't forget those delicious meals, the chicken paprikash and the roasted meats with red cabbage. It was good for his stomach used to csorba soup and polenta."

"I'm sorry it happened that way. I wasn't able to control myself. Pack the most necessary things in the small suitcase, I need to get out of the village this evening. I know Ionescu, he will make good on his threat. If I stay, he will have me arrested tomorrow. I will go to Magyarlapád (today: Lopadea Nouă, Romania) on foot; from there János (the father of our former maid, Zsuzsi) will surely give me a ride to Enyed if I ask him, and I'll take the evening express to Kolozsvár to the Mandulas," my father summarised the things to do.

"Was that Zsuzsi who used to tell me the story that went 'hot water for the baldy!'?" (*scene from Hungarian children's story – translator's note*) I asked, because my father reminded me of my favourite nanny.

"Yes, yes," my father responded, then turned to my mother and continued "Tomorrow you will walk with Gyurika and Baba to Bandi's house, borrow the ox cart, the drivers will load it with the furniture and the chests nailed shut, and you will take them to Aunt Berta, to Enyed. Don't forget the cow, the horse and the sheep: the estate will take them over and Bandi Gere will pay for them. We'll need the money, because the Romanian military drivers are not cheap."

My father had discussed this all well in advance with the administrator of the Bánffy estate, András Gere. My sister Erzsébet was nine years older than me, and she went to the public school in Nagyszeben (today: Sibiu, Romania); her nickname was Baba.

It turned out that my father was right! The next morning, two Romanian policemen showed up looking for my father. It was lucky they didn't take revenge on us for their lack of success.

The following day, we loaded all we had onto the ox carts, and passing through the villages Magyarlapád, Magyarbagó and Csombord (today: Lopadea Nouă, Băgău, Ciumbrud, all in Romania), we traipsed down to Szentkirályi street – pardon me – Strada Libertății in Enyed, to Aunt Berta's house.

Aunt Berta was my mother's aunt, who – for some reason – had inherited the family house against her four brothers. She was the widow of a manufacturer, who was successful at one time, but when she was running out of money she persuaded my mother to buy the house with a right of usufruct by paying in monthly instalments. They concluded the contract and the monthly instalments had to be paid in accordance with the official exchange rate of the Swiss franc.

After we arrived, my mother quickly agreed with her aunt that she would continue to receive the instalments as suggested by the lawyer. In other words: we pay to a relative in Aiud in pengő over there, and she will receive it at home in leu, in accordance with the exchange rate of the Swiss franc.

Aunt Berta watched with horror as her rooms filled up with our crammed furniture.

"God almighty! What is this house going to be like!" she sighed.

"Don't worry, tomorrow all will be empty here," my mother reassured her.

In the meantime, we found out that one of my mother's older sisters as well as her younger sister (with all her family) had already left for Marosvásárhely (today: Târgu Mureş, Romania) to her other sister's house. So they were already in the reattached area.

"Oh, God, let us succeed too," my mother prayed.

I had confusing dreams at night: streetlights were flashing in the dark, I was wandering in a lot of mud, I saw soldiers marching, while I had lost my parents, "Mum, where are you?" I wanted to run, but my feet were mired in the mud and I suddenly woke up with a sweaty forehead and fast heartbeat, feeling my mother's caressing hand.

The following day my mother left early in the morning to get a truck. She was so nervous that she hired the first one to offer itself, even though it was obvious that all of the furniture would not fit on it, as it didn't have a trailer. So they couldn't load the dining room furniture, only the bedroom and the kitchen furniture with all the baggage.

We headed off on this truck – my mother, my sister and I – towards Torda, after saying our sad farewell to my grandmother.

The soldier stepped on the accelerator and the truck set off. We had left the last houses of the town when the soldier – I think he might have been a corporal – who had been telling jokes up to that point, suddenly became serious, and turned to my mother with a frown and said:

"Doamna, I have undertaken to do a very dangerous thing. Our journey will only be successful if you strictly follow my instructions. The officers take it very seriously that the trucks should return empty, so if they spot you, let alone the furniture, they will catch me and you will also be in trouble, because

they will dump your stuff in the ditch. But they won't outwit me – if you box clever too. Listen to me! The first checkpoint will be in Torda, in the middle of the town. I will stop ten metres before it, and I will pretend that the engine has broken down. When the officer looks the other way, I will motion to you and then you should run to the truck and get in the cab. Leave the rest to me!

The soldier tried to ease the tension that arose between us in the cab by telling a few jokes. The engine was murmuring monotonously, the soil was glowing in the late summer sun rays, and the trees along the road and the bushes further away were various shades of green.

We arrived in Torda. The soldier slowed down and continued to drive calmly, apathetically. There were only a few passers-by on the pavement along the road. We had already left the reformed church behind us on the right, when we saw some movement, a gathering. There were two trucks standing there, a hundred metres away from us: an officer with an Entente shoulder-belt lifted up the tarp of the first one and looked into the cargo area.

The road started to rise slightly, the soldier gradually decelerated, looked straight ahead tensely, and then stopped twenty metres before the inspection officer and motioned for us to get off quickly.

"As we agreed, Doamna," he said whispering to my mother, then set off slowly. We were staring numbly after the truck, which stopped ten metres away from the second truck. Our soldier got out, then – watching the major with one eye – he opened the right hood of the engine compartment of the Opel-Blitz and bent over the engine. The major, who was getting nervous, glanced toward the soldier several times. In the meantime, another military truck was also approaching our truck. We took slow steps towards the Opel-Blitz. The officer couldn't remain quiet any longer, and as he was starting to inspect the second truck, he nervously shouted to our soldier:

"Why are you dawdling there, come closer!"

"The carburettor's broken, Domnul Maior," said the soldier, while he was watching either us or him.

At the moment when the major turned again to the vehicle to be inspected, the soldier motioned for us to run. We had to run about ten metres to reach the truck, and the soldier was already behind the steering wheel. I jumped on the

stair of the Blitz behind my mother and my sister, and as soon as I sat on her lap, the soldier stepped on the accelerator and started the truck. The truck – living up to its name – jumped ahead with a roaring engine, and the officer, who had just straightened up hearing the noise, did not have time to be surprised, let alone prevent the departure.

The soldier "reported" the events looking in the rear-view window:

"Now he's run to the camp phone to notify the post at the end of the town. When we spot him, hold on tightly!"

We were so anxious that we couldn't say a word. At the end of the town the road to Kolozsvár started to ascend slowly. An officer showed up twenty metres ahead of us, and he waved with his right hand for the truck to pull over to the right towards the ditch and stop. The soldier was watching tensely with an impassive face, then slowed down, and steered the wheel to the right. Our hearts were pounding; my mother unconsciously pressed me up against her, while she was praying softly. The officer, seeing the situation of the truck, was calmly waiting with his arms crossed.

The soldier suddenly stepped on the accelerator, and the officer hardly had enough time to jump aside. When he turned his face towards the soldier and started to swear furiously, the latter leaned out the window and spat in the officer's face. By the time the officer wiped his face and grabbed his gun, we were already twenty or thirty metres away. His gunshots sounded like faint pops.

"Did that bastard think he could outwit me?" our driver laughed.

"We're free," sighed my mother.

Hardly had our fright faded when we witnessed a sad sight. We saw broken furniture, scattered wicker suitcases and other stuff at the edge of the ditch on both sides of the road to Kolozsvár. There were crying women and cursing men next to them.

"You see, Doamna," said the driver, "how careful we have to be!" They would all have fled north like us, but their trucks were stopped, and the army soldiers dumped their furniture and everything they owned.

Looking wildly left and right we saw so many unfortunate people on the banks of the ditches.

The soldier was driving fast, we climbed up the Felek Hills (today: Feleacu, Romania), and from the peak we could already see the houses of Kolozsvár, bathed in the early autumn sunlight.

We arrived at the Mandulas, in Damjanich Street, after so much anxiety. The interesting thing about the situation was that even our dining room furniture arrived in the afternoon. What happened was that my cousin Icu had managed to get a truck with a trailer, but by the time they arrived at Aunt Berta's house, we had already left. So they placed the dining room furniture on the trailer, while the cargo area of the truck remained empty; that's how they set off after us.

Aunt Erzsi had mixed feelings of sadness and joy. Other relatives had also come from the south, and so there was already so much furniture piled up in the hallway and on the porch that we could only unload our belongings and sleep on the porch of the opposite house. In the meantime, my Uncle Lőrinc (my father's brother) and Uncle Jóska arrived, also from the south. There was a crowd, but what joy and anticipation filled everyone!

People kept asking each other:

"How long until they come? When will the Hungarian troops finally come?"

The city became no man's land from one day to the next. Most of the Romanian army had left the city, but it was not advisable to go out on the streets in the outer district after nightfall. Members of the rear guard, drunken Romanian patrols were on the move, and even gunshots could often be heard.

Finally, the big day arrived. It was a sunlit, early autumn morning in September – the day the Hungarian army entered. The members of the bourgeois families of Kolozsvár – especially the ladies – had already been preparing for this day for weeks. The tailors and the seamstresses tailored and sewed so-called Hungarian garments in secret. The men were wearing Bocskai coats, while the young men were wearing Bocskai coats and caps. The ladies were wearing long skirts in shades of green, white blouses, red vests and headdresses.

On the access road of the city from the direction of Bánffyhunyad (today: Huedin, Romania) – from the edge of the city to the statue of King Matthias Corvinus – there was a huge crowd on both sides, waiting excitedly and happily. There were people carrying their cherished, dusty national flags – which they

had been hiding in the attic or somewhere else – with tears in their eyes. We children were waiving small tricolour flags fluttering on sticks. From time to time we popped our heads up, pushing through the adults, and looked up the road to the west. It was 8 o'clock in the morning, but still no movement! The excitement of the crowd was increasing.

My family – my father, my mother, my sister and I – were standing a hundred metres away from St. Michael's Church, on the side from which we had to look westwards by turning our heads to the left. Suddenly, to the west – quite far away (as we could hardly see it) – some movement started and then cheering could be heard. The crowd took someone on their shoulders and started to throw him back and forth. They threw him up and then caught him again. The news went around: the person being thrown is the first Hungarian soldier. Then the news spread – no, it's a policeman's uniform. It later turned out it was a man from Kolozsvár, who had kept his police uniform for 22 years and put it on that day, and the crowd – too excited from the anticipation – mistook him for a soldier. Everyone had a good laugh at this, but there was not a single soldier anywhere. Choirs started to sing here and there. A brave man stood in front of the crowd, shouted and conducted:

"Red-white-green, precious Hungarian land,

Red-yellow-blue, Romania is on fire!"

"Once again" – and the choir, the people of Kolozsvár, roared, while the impromptu conductor conducted. Then he changed:

"Horthy-Csáky-Teleki, Vlachs, all of you leave!"

Two hundred? Three hundred? – I don't know how many throats the words roared from.

Out of the blue, soldiers wearing khaki uniforms showed up pushing bicycles before them, fully armed.

"Oh, my God," a man shouted next to me, "the Hungarian soldiers!"

And he threw himself into his wife's arms sobbing. "We've made it, after 22 years!"

I looked up: my mother's chin was quivering, she was on the verge of tears, and my father cleared his throat frequently, disguising how moved he was. By the time the crowd recovered from the euphoria, they had already disappeared.

A military brass band showed up; the melody grew stronger. The crowd had long learned the melody and the lyrics from the radio, and they were singing full gusto:

"[...] our ancient mountains await you here again,
Sweet Transylvania here we are, we live and die for you.
The Scythian storm, the rushing troop conquers."

The band changed just as they were passing in front of us:

"Rise, rise soldiers to the battle,
To safeguard the sacred freedom.
The cannon thunders, the sword clashes,
Inspiring the Hungarian to battle!"

Then the infantry platoons showed up in a victory march, one after the other. In front, the officers with drawn swords, usually with a moustache in the style of Pál Jávor [a popular Hungarian actor], a rigid body and boots gleaming in the autumn light. Then the platoon came: helmets on their heads, bayonets on their shoulders, rifle straps stretched with their right arms, trousers baggy at the knees, then tightly buttoned on their shins down to the boots, and they dragged the toes of their boots touching the asphalt, then tapped them onto the asphalt. Or they would have: the road – from the edge of the city to St. Michael's Church – had been sprinkled with flowers by the people of Kolozsvár. They received the Hungarian soldiers with frenzied enthusiasm. Impromptu choirs were formed and sang together the martial songs played by the military bands, chanting the celebratory rhymes.

"Goose liver, duck liver,
No more zece mai!" [Romanian national holiday].

Then, the motorised forces turned up rumbling: the open Botond jeeps, officers on the right of the driver, soldiers in the back. They were waiving, smiling, throwing kisses to the enthusiastically clapping crowd. One of the officers, twirling his moustache and leaning slightly out of the car, waived to a lovely and pretty unwed girl; she stepped out of the crowd, jumped on the running board of the car, put her arms around the officer's neck and kissed the handsome soldier, while the vehicle trundled on. Thereafter, many similar scenes took place.

Suddenly, young men wearing Bocskai caps appeared in the crowd waving Hungarian flags, and furiously told the people that they had caught Romanian priests mingling in the crowd, who were hiding hand grenades under their cassocks. They were going to make an explosion at the place where His Excellency the Regent was to make a speech.

"But we noticed and gave them what they deserved with a flagpole to their faces," said one of them, and then continued:

"The soldiers said that in one of the villages in Szilágy County they fired machine guns into the troops marching from the church tower. Well, they learned their lesson!"

The news about the planned plot proved to be true, because the Regent came from a different direction than we expected (for safety reasons). He was sitting with his wife near the grandstand set up in front of St. Michael's Church, from where he greeted the happy residents of Kolozsvár.

In the evening, the city was ablaze with lights. In front of the statue of King Matthias Corvinus, a military band entertained the enthusiastic and happily strolling crowd. We children – who quickly made casual friends – were playing between the generals under the main statue; we ran around and admired their huge arms, guns and flags cast in bronze.

In the streets, ladies and gentlemen wearing Hungarian garments were strolling. Here and there, elegant young army officers carrying shiny swords showed up; in their arms they were holding young happy and beautiful Transylvanian ladies from Kolozsvár, dressed in Hungarian garments.

Suddenly a large group turned up: a group of young maids serving in the city, wearing red vests, white skirts and green aprons.

"We won't serve Romanian mistresses anymore," they chanted loudly and repeatedly.

This is how the people of the capital of Transylvania celebrated until daybreak.

That was the first time – when I was seven and a half years old – that I had felt proudly, happily and freely Hungarian. I didn't have to bottle up my feelings, my Hungarianness, I didn't have to tolerate the mockery and name-calling by the Romanian kids any longer. It was such an experience for a child preparing

for the second grade of elementary school that it determined his nationality for an entire lifetime.

The lines above may sound odd to an outsider, to my compatriots who have never lived in scattered Hungarian communities. It is unusual especially for the younger generations, who have heard more of "*magyarkodás*" (a pejorative expression used for being extremely proud of one's Hungarian nationality), nationalism, irredentism and populism than how the Hungarians live – or whether they live at all – in the neighbouring countries. They found out about this topic only after the political transition, when the Hungarians living outside Hungary showed up.

I feel that the above experience and the reasons for it require further explanation. It dates back to the beginning of my human existence. When I was 7 months old, my father was relocated from my native village to the magically beautiful Remete (today: Râmeț, Romania] – inhabited by the Moți – which has a lovely landscape of high hills and valleys. There, the Moțis live kilometres away from each other in special-shaped houses with straw roofs; you can find edelweiss on the peaks and clear spring water trickles in the valley, cold even in summertime. It is a pleasant, but bleak land, especially in winter. My father was promoted from associate notary to district notary. An orthodox priest lived nearby and from time to time my ten-year-old sister visited him "down the hill" – as they lived at the bottom of the hill – to practise the Romanian language. Here, in the close family circle, isolated from the rest of the world, I heard only Hungarian words. The first words ever pronounced...

Figure 1. Pál Teleki on the jamboree organized in Gödöllő in 1933.

Figure 2. Miklós Horthy in April 1938 at the airport of Budaörs, when the 25th anniversary of the Hungarian Scouting was celebrated.

ZSOMBOR SZABOLCS PÁL

THE IMPACTS OF PORTUGUESE SALAZARISM ON HUNGARY BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

In my paper, I wish to briefly describe a specific aspect of Portuguese-Hungarian relations, namely the impacts that the political reforms carried out in Portugal in the 1930s had on Hungary during the Horthy era. Relations between these two countries do not have a long-standing history due to their different cultural orientation, significant geographical distance and differences in the historical challenges they encountered. However, in the course of their histories, there were periods when the inhabitants of these two countries started to show increased interest in each other – this mainly applies to Hungarians, who showed interest in the Portuguese. However, this attention was not permanent, but one with specific fluctuations; during the 19th and 20th centuries there were periods when this interest grew, and then waned after a certain time. Of these periods, the timespan between the two World Wars stands out as one when Hungarians started to show increased interest in developments taking place in Portugal.

This interest in Portugal is inseparable from the changes in political, economic and social ideologies in Europe following World War I. During this period there was mounting criticism of the major, dominant ideologies of the 19th century such as liberalism, individualism and the democratic and parliamentary political regimes, as attention was called to their disadvantages,[1] the increasing

1 Bertényi 2000, p. 237.

economic disparities and the anarchic character of parliamentary governance.[2] In this situation, several attempts were made to tackle the problems, and there were also attempts to avoid the imminent social explosion by redefining the role of the state and the relationship between employers and employees.[3] According to some, the earlier liberal ideas were essentially correct and did not need to be fully discarded; it would suffice to make efforts to renew them.[4] Others, such as those believing in communism and socialism, made efforts to build a society based on full-fledged egalitarianism,[5] whereas, in response to this, the right-wing experimented with placing the primary emphasis on the community and authoritarianism in the form of fascism or Nazism.[6] The resurgent corporatist teaching of the Catholic Church described in the papal encyclical entitled *Quadragesimo anno* of Pope Pius XI published in 1931 appeared against this background as a half-way house solution, recognising the problems and trying to reconcile various solutions.[7] It aimed to promote reconciliation between different classes, accepting the mutual dependence of the owners of capital and workers, to establish the harmony between property and work by reorganising social order in a way that prevents class struggle and is based on orders.[8]

Although this idea was never translated from theory into practice,[9] there were still some states which referred back to it when transforming their political and social landscape. Portugal was one of them. The smaller country on the Iberian Peninsula abolished the monarchy in 1910, and then the republic was proclaimed. However, for the two and a half decades of its history the First Portuguese Republic was confronted with permanent crises: it did not manage to stabilise its finances and put its economy on a sustainable trajectory,[10] and the exaggerated powers of the legislative body and the ensuing obstruction

2 Zachar 2014, pp. 21–30, 120.
3 Strausz 2010, p. 89.
4 Lackó 1975, p. 318.
5 Szalai 2002, p. 54.
6 Ibid.
7 Gergely 1977, p. 149.
8 Strausz 2011a, pp. 108–109.
9 Ormos 2009, p. 201.
10 Szilágyi 2015, p. 23.

practised by parties rendered the Parliament inefficient.[11] While several attempts were made to transform and renew the regime, these only brought limited results. Finally, the republican period was put an end to by a military coup: the right-wing opposition decided to topple the governing regime in 1926 and save the nation. The military coup started in the city of Braga, and only limited fighting was needed to take over the whole country, even though Lisbon did not join in.[12]

With the situation stabilising, a military officer named António Óscar Fragoso Carmona managed to seize power. However, it was not long before he had to realise that – apart from plans of saving the country – the military did not have a coherent programme to manage the daunting challenges facing ailing Portugal and to remedy the increasingly severe economic problems, and thus it was necessary to involve civilians with proper expertise in legal, financial and public administration matters in the government in order to normalise the situation. He thought that, although the representatives of the conservative bourgeois circles would be invited to participate in government, the military would be able to keep the governance of the country under control by retaining the presidential function, among other things.[13] In order to implement his ideas, he involved the members of the Catholic Centre Party (in Portuguese: Partido do Centro Católico, PCC), predominantly university professors from the University of Coimbra, in governing the country. This is how one of the outstanding figures of the party, already an acknowledged financial expert at that time and a university professor,[14] António de Oliveira Salazar became the country's finance minister.[15] Salazar, however, set various conditions for accepting the position,[16] through which he managed to establish a sort of "financial dictatorship" around himself. His measures, however, did not remain unsuccessful, and through the stringent control and reforms of

11 Szilágyi 2008, p. 10, and Afonso 1972, p. 164.
12 Georgel 1985, p. 78.
13 Szilágyi 2008, p. 31.
14 Carvalho 2008, p. 101.
15 Kay 1970, p. 41.
16 Henriques & Sampaio e Mello 2007, pp. 111–112.

central government expenditure, he soon managed to establish budgetary equilibrium. As this period was deemed a sort of miracle in Portugal at that time,[17] this success further enhanced the recognition of Salazar, and his influence as a politician became increasingly dominant outside his ministry as well. Thus, in 1932 he managed to have Carmona appoint him as Portugal's prime minister. Following this, a broad space opened up for the ambitious politician to implement social and political reforms. Though contemporary right-wing regimes, predominantly fascism, are likely to have had an impact on these,[18] Salazar, when defining the grounding principles of his regime, placed emphasis on the previously mentioned papal teachings,[19] and he was always careful not to identify with Nazism and fascism;[20] as for the strong state, he was of the opinion that it cannot subordinate everything to the ideal of the nation or the race,[21] and must operate within the boundaries of Christian morals and law under all circumstances.[22]

However, in addition to emphasising the principles of the Christian faith, with the constitution adopted in 1933 – i.e. one year after being appointed prime minister – Salazar established a regime which in nature was a right-wing, authoritarian, nationalist regime,[23] but it was by no means similar to the totalitarian regimes which he rejected. Soon, his success attracted attention domestically as well as abroad. This is very well justified by the reports sent home to Budapest by the Hungarian embassy in Madrid, in which Salazar's activities were described in a tone similar to the following report dated from 1932:

> "During my career in foreign policy over the past twenty-five years, I have hardly met a person more valuable and more interesting than him. A university professor and a man of science. He has worked miracles as finance minister /since 1928/ [...] A modest, introvert, absolutely

17 Afonso 1972, p. 168.
18 Torgal 2009a, p. 206.
19 Kay 1970, p. 63.
20 Szilágyi 2009a, p. 80.
21 Braga da Cruz 1988, p. 49.
22 Duarte Silva 1989, p. 62.
23 Szilágyi 2009b, pp. 27–28, 34.

> honest, deeply religious person, the leader of the clerical party. In his role as finance minister, he transformed a deficit of hundreds of millions into a major budgetary surplus like a magician, and all this took place amidst the economic and financial crisis."[24]

Unsurprisingly, not long after this, not only diplomats, but the Hungarian public also started to pay attention to the changes taking place in Portugal. In Hungary during the first decade following World War I, it was István Bethlen who made an attempt to restore the old regime and conventional political ideology while introducing moderate reforms, but during the Great Depression, after the failure of his policies, the prevailing atmosphere of disappointment in parliamentarism, liberalism and capitalism became more and more tangible.[25] Owing to their unpleasant memories of the left-wing experiences after the end of World War I, members of the Hungarian political elite were more open to reforming the regime from the right,[26] and due to this, Gyula Gömbös had already made attempts at the corporative transformation of the country's political regime.[27] However, the leadership of the Hungarian Catholic Church did not seem to be particularly open to the social teachings enshrined in the encyclical letters of Pope Pius XI.[28] Instead of renewal, a group emerged in opposition to the pro-government Catholic party, and in opposition to the Church leadership, and this group thought that the official Catholic politics of past years had failed and that something new was needed. The members of this group were largely influenced by the papal teachings: in line with these, Actio Catholica and other organisations promoting corporatism were established at the beginning of the 1930s.[29] In the meantime, György Széchényi and the group of young Catholics centred around him welcomed the above ideas both politically and ideologically:[30] they founded their own paper in 1931 titled

24 MNL OL 1932.
25 Ormos 2004, pp. 207–208.
26 Békés 2006, p. 108.
27 Szalai 2002, pp. 66–68.
28 Gergely 1997, p. 6.
29 Idem, p. 155.
30 Hámori 1994, p. 56.

Korunk Szava,[31] in which they tried to represent a more progressive Catholic standpoint than that taken by the conservative clerical press.[32]

In their paper, they provided ample room for articles and discussions on corporatism. The staff of the paper seemed to have followed European examples and experiments with great interest, since presumably they would like to have proved that the principles advocated by them do not only have a theoretical appeal, but are also feasible in practice. This is how the Salazar regime in Portugal came to the forefront of their attention. The first articles discussing the country and Salazar himself were published in 1934, i.e. two years after Salazar was appointed and one year after the introduction of the new constitution, and after this the authors regularly brought up the topic in the following years. Among many other things, the articles discussed Portugal's new constitution,[33] the characteristics of the Portuguese regime,[34] and Salazar himself.[35] When describing the politician, they were not sparing with positive adjectives, underlining his deep Catholic faith penetrating even his work as the prime minister of the country,[36] his scientific meticulousness, expertise and the distance he keeps from dictatorial or authoritarian solutions[37] – as they did not have any personal experience, most probably they were not uninfluenced by the Portuguese propaganda machinery, increasingly active abroad as well, and the toposes suggested thereby.[38] After the publication of writings in *Korunk Szava*, other Catholic publications also started to show interest in the topic, including *Katolikus Szemle,*[39] and *Magyar Kultura*[40] also published articles on the reforms introduced by Salazar. In addition, the author of the latter article started to touch upon an issue which became rather popular only in a few years' time,

31 Békés 2006, p. 109.
32 Gergely 1977, p. 155.
33 Anonymous 1934, p. 241.
34 Müller 1934, pp. 479–480.
35 Nyisztor 1935, p. 88, and Neller 1935, pp. 243–244.
36 Nyisztor 1935, p. 88.
37 Neller 1935, p. 244.
38 Janeiro 2004, pp. 46–49.
39 Csiszár 1935, pp. 543–549.
40 Fábián 1935, pp. 87–92.

namely the parallels that can possibly be drawn between Hungary and Portugal in some respects,[41] and the idea that the country on the Iberian Peninsula could serve as an example to follow for Hungarians: "We, Hungarian Catholics read this book on Salazar with envy, because the ideology therein has already taken shape and the laws of Salazar are already applied. Happy small Portugal!"[42]

After Gyula Gömbös came to power in 1935, the editorial board of *Korunk Szava* split into two, and the advocates of corporatism and its implementation even through authoritarian means centred around *Uj Kor* and *Vigila*,[43] whereas the original paper was the place for those who from then on distanced themselves from authoritarian regimes and methods.[44] Understandably, the enthusiasm for the state of Salazar of the journalists working for the paper also shrank and they tried to shift emphasis on messages of other character in relation to the activities of the Portuguese politician:

> "The lesson to learn is the following: the way the small Portugal progresses bravely and with determination on its own path in between the temptations of foreign powers and ideologies may be worth recommending to our small country as an example to follow [...] amongst the clashes of foreign powers and intellectual interests small nations need to be particularly careful to preserve their own existence, which they can only do with their own methods and devices."[45]

As opposed to this, those at *Uj Kor* which still maintained their support for the corporatist ideology, made efforts to prove that authoritarianism is not identical to dictatorship: although Portugal is also often accused of building a dictatorship, an authoritarian government led by Catholic politicians according to Catholic principles of state administration and social sciences was established there, and the country managed to establish a corporatist state without using dictatorial means.[46]

41 Idem, p. 87.
42 Idem, p. 92.
43 Hámori 1994, p. 58, and Vásárhelyi 2002, pp. 133–135.
44 Vásárhelyi 2002, pp. 137–138.
45 Anonymous 1938, p. 507.
46 Anonymous 1935, p. 22.

Thus, *Korunk Szava*, which was the first to show interest in Salazar's activities, turned its back on attempts to renew Catholic politics on a corporatist basis, but this did not mean that the changes in Portugal went unnoticed by Hungarian intellectuals. The number of articles on this issue started to increase especially from 1938, perhaps not independently from political changes in the country, primarily not independently from the appointment of Béla Imrédy as prime minister in May. He was expected by many abroad and domestically as well to clamp down on Arrow Cross fascist propaganda. In the beginning, the politician did meet these expectations,[47] because as a religious Catholic, he announced a reform programme based on the social teachings of the Church, primarily on the encyclicals *Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno*,[48] which was capable of restricting the popularity of fascists through the corporatist, collectivist reform of the outdated social structure, closing the gap between social classes and a bigger role played by the state in economic governance.[49] His appointment as prime minister also helped Christian religious intellectuals who believed in the feasibility of the neo-conservative political ideas of the organic model of social organisation come closer to power.[50] When elaborating his reforms, Imrédy may have had the economic and social solutions of the then-authoritarian regimes in sight – of which he arguably found the Italian and Portuguese measures the worthiest of studying and transposing.[51] His interest in the Salazarian regime is also proved by the fact that he did talk about it when the newly appointed ambassador of Portugal to Hungary, José da Costa Carneiro, made his debut visit to him in 1938. During this visit, Imrédy told him that he knew Salazar's works written in foreign languages and he himself would like to have visited Portugal in order to take a closer look at the political system of the Portuguese politician, but as the governor of the National Bank he had not had the time to do so. During their conversation, he also asked the ambassador to send him

47 Szalai 2002, p. 82.
48 Gergely 1983, p. 416, and Sipos 1970, pp. 40–41.
49 Sipos 2001, p. 23, and Ungváry 2002, p. 4.
50 Lackó 1975, p. 335.
51 Ungváry 2002, p. 11.

further literature on the Portuguese system.[52] In several of his reports Costa Carneiro expressed his view that in his programme Imrédy was following the Salazarian example and after the Hungarian prime minister announced his programme, the ambassador drew the conclusion: "this programme fits with the general direction of the current Portuguese reconstruction and certain details seem to be under the direct impact of his Excellency's [i.e. Salazar] governance."[53] He shared this observation of his with Imrédy during the visit mentioned above, adding that he had followed the work of the Hungarian prime minister with interest and due to the similarities in their reforms and ideological convictions, he also reports in detail on it to Salazar.[54] The idea that the former leader of the National Bank of Hungary might become a sort of Hungarian Salazar was cherished by many of his Hungarian compatriots due to his competencies, which resemble those of the Portuguese scientist-politician, his financial insight, deep Catholic faith and planned reforms, and there were many who did try to draw a parallel between them.[55]

Despite his interest in the Salazarian regime, Imrédy – as he himself mentioned to Costa Carneiro – was unable to travel to Portugal to gain first-hand experience of the reforms and transformation; however, as the governor of the National Bank, he played a very important role in supporting the study trip made to Portugal in 1937 by Vid Mihelics, the renowned social scientist of those times belonging to the initial circle of *Korunk Szava* and the circle of the young Catholics, who later joined the editorial board of *Uj Kor*.[56] Accordingly, Imrédy contributed significantly to the first book written in Hungarian on the reforms introduced in Portugal.[57] Mihelics gave an account of his study trip in several articles written for *Nemzeti Ujság*, and

52 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1938b. In any case, from the internal correspondence of Portuguese departments we know that Imrédy's request was taken seriously, and the ambassador was soon sent a list of recommended literature, which Costa Carneiro received with thanks. See Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1938c–d.

53 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1938a.

54 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1938c.

55 See MTI 1938, Sipos 2001, p. 28; Képviselőházi napló 1938, p. 746.

56 Frenyó 2002, p. 24.

57 Mihelics 1941, p. 8.

he managed to have personal meetings with several leading officials of the system, including Salazar himself.[58]

Nevertheless, he was not the only journalist who decided to visit Portugal to collect personal experience on the regime being built there. György Oláh, a sociographer, author of *Three million beggars* and later member of the circle of Imrédy, sent home his reports in the summer of 1938 to *Uj Magyarság*, a journal which was established as a paper supporting Gömbös, which then gradually radicalised.[59] Hardly had he arrived home from Portugal, when another major contemporary social scientist and author[60] Béla Kovrig – who also published his articles in *Nemzeti Ujság* just like Mihelics and who also had an interest in the corporatist regime – arrived in Lisbon and later wrote about his experiences.[61] He was appointed by Imrédy as head of the Social Policy Department 5 established at the Prime Minister's Office and mostly in charge of the governmental propaganda, which on paper was responsible for drawing up social policy recommendations. Later, during the Teleki period, Kovrig continued to work at the Prime Minister's Office and participated in the establishment and governance of the National Policy Service, established to accomplish similar objectives.[62]

A major feature of the *New Portugal*, a book by Mihelics written with scientific detail but permeated with sympathy for the system, is that – in addition to a detailed description of the Salazarian regime – it also raises the idea of the regime being worth following as a model and drew the following conclusion: although the solutions and examples applied in Portugal might be useful for Hungary, in the course of their potential transposition it was important not to fall into the trap of copying them; Hungarians should use the model in line with their own national specificities and needs:

> "We did not show Portuguese corporatism for the sake of showing it, but also with the idea in mind that we should show what can be

58 As for these see Mihelics 1937a–d.
59 His articles related to his trip: Oláh 1938a–e.
60 Kerekes 2004, pp. 253–256, and Strausz 2011b, p. 181.
61 His writings related to his trip: Kovrig 1938a–d, and Kovrig 1940.
62 Szabó 1996, p. 147.

> taken over by Hungary from this big experiment. Copying the system in its entirety did not seem to be a desirable solution. The lesson to be learned is that the new Portugal has been able to reap the benefits of the system by giving up integral corporatism as opposed to other corporatist attempts in other countries, and by opting for economic pluralism; this makes it absolutely obvious that when implementing this mixed economic system, every nation needs to take into account their own production relations and essential needs. [...] It is clear that in our country the production sectors which might require a corporatist organisation are different from those in Portugal."[63]

The interest in Portugal is also very well illustrated by the critical acclaim received by the book, which otherwise was also closely monitored by Salazar.[64] Individual book reviews, beyond summarising their authors' views on Salazar, also reflected on whether it would be worth implementing similar transformation in Hungary. Some were in favour, emphasising that in Portugal the new regime was built upon actual Christian foundations, and therefore provided a very important orientation in times of ideological uncertainties,[65] and the results achieved by the Portuguese prime minister were by all means remarkable;[66] in addition, "people would have got much further in every country, had they known and studied Salazar's solution properly".[67]

At the same time, there were several authors who – in addition to acknowledging certain merits of Salazar – warned against praising his regime unconditionally. The Christian Democrat István Barankovics, for example, criticised the Portuguese regime for several reasons including on the basis of state theory, its diversion from the principle of the separation of powers, the subordination of freedom to authority and the excessive dependence of the whole regime on the person of Salazar himself.[68] He emphasised: "as the Salazarian

63 Mihelics 1941, p. 240.
64 Frenyó 2002, p. 56.
65 Fábián 1939, and Nyisztor 1939.
66 Cavallier 1939.
67 I. B. 1939, p. 10.
68 Barankovics 1939.

construct and success are decisively based on the personality of Salazar, his construct in my eyes is much more of a great experiment, whose proved lessons we need to apply, (rather) than an example to follow with minor or major modifications".[69] Others – while recognising the results of Salazar – voiced their reservations concerning the system and its exemplary character based on economic grounds, underlining that Portugal, even with its achievements taken into account, is a rather underdeveloped country, and beyond that, its success was not unambiguously due to its novel principles, but rather to application of the classical recipes of economics.[70] Such criticism is demonstrated by the following excerpt from an article published in *Közgazdasági Szemle*:

> "[…] And yet, the final conclusions of Mihelics need to be taken with a certain degree of reservation. The author is looking for a way out from current social and moral chaos and – even if he does not say that the Portuguese corporatism and the underlying ideology are the panacea – he is of the opinion that they are the closest to what can be considered as the right direction. However, we must not forget that, on the one hand, economic development has not been smooth, even in Portugal, in the last decade, and certain important sectors still stagnate; on the other hand, it is hardly possible to follow the example of a country, which in spite of all laudable efforts is still at about the end of the list in Europe in economic terms. Finally, the question remains whether the undeniable Portuguese results are in fact closely related to the new social order (or the social order, which is at least called "new")."[71]

Interestingly, at the same time there were several critical authors who – despite all their concerns and doubts – reflecting upon the Hungarian and European state of affairs found it important to mention: it is by all means a welcome development that Mihelics draws attention to Portugal as an example which still belongs to the more normal ones in chaotic ideological times: "[from the material accumulated by Michelics] it seems that in the huge pool of bad

69 Idem, p. 253.
70 Nagy 1940.
71 Major 1939, p. 322.

examples and options, which are more and more numerous every day, this is still the least bad one".[72]

During his term of office as prime minister, Imrédy gradually drifted further and further away from corporatist ideas, and following his visit to Germany he articulated a new direction, which after the removal of its conservative features, would have transformed the Hungarian political system into an authoritarian regime.[73] This change led to his forced resignation in 1939, but his downfall did not put an end to the political impacts exerted by Salazarism. The idea of reconstructing the Hungarian political system on corporatist fundaments was also contemplated by his successor, Pál Teleki, since he also wanted to use it as a device to weaken the strengthening ambitions of the extreme right, as was the initial intention of Imrédy,[74] guarding against the totalitarian ambitions and properly transforming the Parliament according to what he thought had been required in those times.[75] In the course of the planned transformation, he might have had Italian and Austrian examples and the Portuguese experiment in mind. In his speech delivered in the Upper House of the Parliament during the debate of the draft constitutional reform dated 1940, he made a reference to it by saying: "[...] Portugal is a small state, and therefore it provides much more lessons to learn for us than the machineries of large states, which can afford to do a lot of things a small state cannot".[76] In an earlier speech in the Parliament he also announced to have the intention of having Salazar's book translated in order to have a better understanding of state machinery he had developed and make it more known.[77] This translation – the Hungarian version of Salazar's *Peaceful Revolution* – was finally published in 1940 for the first time, followed by a second edition in 1941.[78]

Teleki received the book itself directly from Salazar with the help of the Portuguese ambassador, Carlos de Almeida Alfonseca de Sampaio Garrido,

72 Gáspár 1939, p. 75.
73 Sipos 1999, pp. 16–18.
74 Ablonczy 2000, p. 123, and Czettler 2008, p. 24.
75 Ablonczy 2005, p. 333.
76 Felsőházi napló 1940, p. 174.
77 Képviselőházi napló 1943, pp. 1182–1183.
78 Salazar 1940, and Salazar 1941.

appointed in November 1939, who also managed to have the book dedicated by the politician himself to the Hungarian prime minister.[79] Teleki thanked Salazar for the gift in a letter, in which he also informed his Portuguese counterpart of his long-standing admiration of his work, and then he asked for permission from Salazar to have the book translated.[80] From the reasons given in the letter it also becomes clear: he found it important to have the Hungarian translation because in his opinion the Portuguese nation had been resurrected under the reign of Salazar and this resurrection might have much to teach to his own compatriots, since Portugal and Hungary had much in common in terms of their size and problems, whereas the solutions applied by nations larger than Hungary would be unreasonable to copy. He also elaborated on the principles that he wanted to permeate the Hungarian nation with and which are very similar to those voiced by Salazar. It goes without saying that Salazar gave his permission to have the book translated; what is more, he claimed Teleki's request had filled him with pride,[81] Teleki sent a translated copy to his Portuguese counterpart.[82] The publication of the book in Hungary was so dear to the heart of the Hungarian politician that he even wrote the foreword in which he says the following:

> "I requested permission from Oliveira Salazar to have his book translated into Hungarian. I deemed it important for Hungarian people to have a better understanding of this great and serious man and his consistent work building up his country. In these times of profound transformation in the world and having to meet our own daunting challenges, I deemed it important for the Hungarian nation to learn about similar problems, ambitions of as many countries and nations as possible, furthermore to learn about statesmen and their work of governance."[83]

79 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1940a.
80 Torre do Tombo 1940, pp. 727–728.
81 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1940b.
82 Torre do Tombo 1940, p. 729.
83 Teleki 1941, pp. 5–6.

The other foreword of the book[84] was written by György Ottlik[85] who made a personal visit to Portugal at the invitation of the Salazarian state.

According to the reports made by the Portuguese ambassador, Salazar's book was received with great acclaim by the Hungarian public.[86] Certainly, it is true there were positive reviews: these emphasised, in the first place, the Christian foundations of the system, the balance maintained between dictatorship and freedom and the distance kept from the overindulgences of the then fashionable state ideologies,[87] and also the fact that "Those advocating dictatorship erroneously and deceptively include Salazar in the group of those who follow this principle of governance and justify the righteousness of these regimes."[88] However, negative reviews were also published, emphasising among other things the improper functioning of the corporations and the dictatorial features of the system, doubting its adaptability in Hungary in any way.[89]

Teleki passed away in 1941. This and Hungary's drifting into war caused the issue of state reform to be removed from the political agenda once and for all. However, the interest in Portugal was maintained, even if at a lower intensity. In 1941 a short, translated text was published on the issue dedicated to the memory of Pál Teleki, but it received no particular attention,[90] and in the following year Elemér Pajzs, translator-author-journalist, publishing several articles on Portugal and therefore maintaining close relations with the Portuguese Embassy in Budapest[91] also published a book on this topic. This work[92] was mostly a compilation of material prepared by the propaganda

84 MTI 1940.

85 Ottlik also wrote several articles in Pester Lloyd and Nemzeti Ujság on his experiences during his trip. See Ottlik 1940a–h. These were published by Pester Lloyd in a collection, see Ottlik 1940i.

86 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1941.

87 Lacza 1942.

88 Ajtay 1941, p. 166.

89 B. M. 1941.

90 Szedlár 1941.

91 Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático 1943a. The Portuguese propaganda machinery made efforts to broaden the cooperation with the author as they thought Pajzs was very useful in promoting the country. See Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático [s.a.].

92 Pajzs 1942.

machinery of Salazar, and therefore did not provide any substantive, new narrative concerning the regime or its applicability in Hungary.

Though from this time onwards, the Portuguese system with its political reforms was less and less touted as a model in Hungary, for some the country still served as an example being one of the very few European states which managed to avoid being drawn by foreign powers into a war which set the whole continent ablaze:

> "One particularly specific feature of Salazar's system is the fact that this Christian form of dictatorship received recognition in the opposing camps. […] The fascist, national socialist states praise its bravery and supremacy in breaking with the liberal, free competition-based social system and helped the principle of authority come into power in an extremely restless country with revolutionary inclinations. At the same time, Salazar preserved the fairest conduct towards the Anglo-Saxon powers, […] the Portuguese government is alert in monitoring every turn of international politics, but it is stable in maintaining its peaceful conduct in the context of clashes between neighbouring great powers. […] Its Christian system and the stable political status rooted in people make Portugal, the work of Salazar, an extremely precious factor in European development."[93]

The role of small nations during and after the war was the core message and lesson learned, which came to the centre of attention in 1943, the year preceding the German occupation, when Hungary was visited at the invitation of the government[94] by João de Ameal, Portuguese academic and politician, who played a very important part in articulating the ideology of the Salazarian regime and the anti-liberal, anti-democratic views it was based on.[95] In an interview Ameal himself expressed the idea which later was reflected on in the articles of several Hungarian authors:[96]

93 -X- 1942.
94 MTI 1943.
95 Torgal 2009b, pp. 83–86, and Pinto 1994.
96 See e.g. Passuth 1943, and Dessewffy 1943.

"Throughout the arduous centuries, Portugal and Hungary always found the most appropriate paths that their historical traditions obliged them to follow. This is the key to the weight and power of the two states, regardless of the fact that they belong to the so-called "small nations". There is no knowing what peace will follow and on what foundation Europe will be reconstructed. But it is for sure that *this peace and this reconstruction will need the Hungarian nation."*[97]

After the war ended, in the new political environment taking shape in Hungary, due to its right-wing nature the Portuguese example and its adaptability were finally taken off the agenda. Books on Salazar describing Salazarism were all banned[98] and the experts studying this issue were reprimanded for their former views.[99] In any case, interesting and also symptomatic of the way of thinking the elite had between the two World Wars is the statement purportedly made by Miklós Horthy in his exile in Portugal:

"[...] here I found a power which I have always had to look at with an ever-increasing admiration and which is guaranteed by the perfect administration under the paternal and safe rule of Dr Oliveira Salazar, this broad-minded statesman with clear vision. [...] If all dictatorships were like this one, it would be the best form of government known today."[100]

97 Konkoly 1943.

98 See temporary national government decree 530/1945. M.E. on the destruction of fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-democratic publications.

99 As for the case of Mihelics, see Frenyó 2002, p. 79.

100 Pándi 1991, pp. 136–137.

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ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN POST-TRIANON HUNGARY

The literature is still rather divided over the evaluation of the Horthy era, and the same applies to the assessment of the results of the Hungarian economy. Fortunately, more recently works have been published which made efforts to realistically discuss this issue, based on actual calculations.[1] In this study, the Horthy period is presented in the context of international comparisons, and the results achieved compared to the base year of 1920 are evaluated in actual terms. The development of the Hungarian economy after the Great Depression is compared to the growth rate in the USA and in the Western European economies, with the latter considered to be the average European growth rate, behind which the Hungarian economy lagged only slightly.[2] Based on an examination of the Hungarian welfare system in light of economic modernisation, it is clear that the performance of the whole system determined the development of the welfare system and its coverage. Prior to World War II, the Hungarian welfare system achieved the level which in the following period would have allowed for development along European lines.[3]

Undoubtedly, the Hungarian economy experienced several successful periods in the 20th century. One such period was the economic growth in the

1 Romsics 1999, p. 172.
2 Romsics 2017, p. 388.
3 Szávai 2017.

era of dualism, but what can be said of the Hungarian economic recovery after the Peace Treaty of Trianon? Is it true that the imposed peace treaty only had a moderate influence on economic output or that it did not have a significant detrimental impact on the economy? In my opinion, economic output was substantially impacted by the loss of wealth and income resulting from the peace treaty, the scope of which basically determined the conditions of development going forward.

Up until the 1990s, economic performance was measured using gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Relying on this method and comparing European countries (calculating in 1990 Geary–Khamis[4] international dollars), we see an interesting and balanced situation as regards the performance of the Hungarian economy between the two World Wars. Economic policy consistently played an outstanding, key role in this regard.[5] First, we must account for the centuries-old difference between countries in the European centre and on the periphery.[6] In 1913, the last year of peace, the output of the Hungarian economy was nearly identical to economic output of the Czech territories, whereas Austria outperformed both.

If we also take into account the countries in the Balkans as well, Hungary's economic output was considerably higher than the average for the Balkans and Central Europe between the two World Wars. In the past, textbooks usually emphasised the negative aspects of the economy during the Horthy era. Our intention is to refine the previous opinions and align them to reflect actual economic performance. Accordingly, we can state that Hungary's economic indicators were close to those of the Italian and Czech economies and were better than those of Portugal, Spain and Poland.

In this period, there were times when the output of the Hungarian economy approached that of Finland, even though the economic situation

4 In the historic overview of GDP, the values are represented in "Geary–Khamis dollars" (G–K dollars or international dollars). This indicator was created in 1990 to promote the comparison of countries. The method is based on differences in purchasing power and average international commodity prices.

5 Szávai 2010.

6 Domonkos 2016.

in Hungary had changed drastically. From an economic policy perspective, a new era started, the fundamental principles of which included autarchy, an import-substituting industrial policy and a selective agricultural policy, new customs tariffs and export subsidies, as well as a new foreign trade strategy.

Table 1. Net domestic product per capita in crowns (1913)

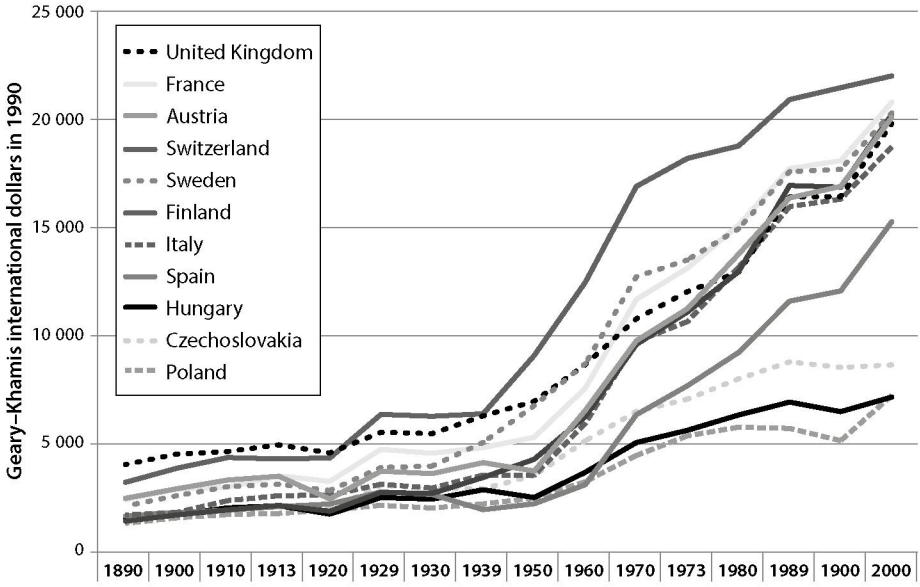
Austria		**516**
Alpine regions	790	
Czech, Moravian, Silesian regions	630	
South Tyrol, Trieste, Istria	450	
Slovenia, Dalmatia, Bukovina	300	
Galicia	250	
Hungary		**435**
Territory after 1920	521	
Territories of "successor states"	374	
Croatia-Slavonia		**295**
Habsburg Monarchy		**475**

Source: Eddie, S.M. 1989.

Naturally, there were preconditions which had to be taken into account by Hungary's economic policymakers. What was behind the macroeconomic developments that supported the above statistical facts? The economic integration of the Habsburg Monarchy was followed by a particularly difficult economic environment:[7]

7 Maddison 2003.

Chart 1. Gross domestic product in European countries, 1890–2000



Source: Author's own compilation based on Maddison 2003.

The new framework for economic policy: economic exhaustion and loss of wealth

World War I consumed the equivalent of two-and-a-half years of Hungary's peacetime national income. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was exhausted by the constant pressure to ensure the necessary troop strength and capital.[8]

Wartime exhaustion required large-scale state intervention, centralised state control and the manufacture of replacement materials in large volumes.[9] The direct war expenditures were to be covered with the help of the central

8 Berend & Ránki 1973, pp. 522–523.
9 Szterényi & Ladányi 1934.

bank and the issuance of war bonds in both parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. All of this was accompanied by mounting inflation. According to some estimates, the war cost Hungary 32 billion gold crowns. The debts incurred during the war were imposed upon the countries which started the war, while the debts dating from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were split up between the new owners of territories after the disintegration of the Monarchy.[10] Together with changes in the sources of income and economic structure, Hungary's loss of wealth was significant. According to calculations by Frigyes Fellner, from the wealth of the countries subject to the Holy Crown of Hungary, which rounded up to 41.521 billion gold crowns, Hungary's wealth after Trianon amounted to 15.676 billion gold crowns.[11] The peace treaty of Trianon enshrined the transfer of territories, which resulted in a loss of wealth for the new Kingdom of Hungary and the Republic of Austria. National wealth was distributed to the successor states as follows:[12]

Table 2.

Elements of national wealth	Post-Trianon Hungary		Romania	Czechoslovakia
	crowns	%	crowns	crowns
I. Land	7,235,779,054	34.94	4,593,564,283	3,199,940,212
II. Mines and foundries	915,952,464	4.42	911,506,093	370,164,101
III. Buildings	4,533,656,994	21.89	1,561,712,423	1,073,915,881
Real estate	12,685,388,512	61.25	7,046,782,799	4,644,020,194
IV. Means of transport	2,125,021,866	10.26	1,389,228,176	1,013,533,301
V. Moveable property	5,787,527,842	27.94	2,951,513,100	2,098,572,594
VI. Foreign claims	112,882,026	0.55	20,340,209	7,173,430
Total gross national wealth	20,710,820,246	100.00	11,407,864,284	7,763,299,519

10 Gratz & Schüller 1930, pp. 149–164.
11 Szávai 2004, pp. 80–81.
12 See: Szávai 2014, and Szávai 2011.

Foreign debt	5,034,532,777	24.31	1,242,109,587	955,216,393
Net national wealth	**15,676,287,469**	75.69	10,165,754,697	6,808,083,126

Elements of national wealth	**Yugoslavia**	**Austria**	**The city of Fiume and its district**
	crowns	crowns	crowns
I. Land	4,385,430,277	393,857,405	30,146,415
II. Mines and foundries	24,455,041	1,111,593	-
III. Buildings	1,204,549,622	75,869,191	125,232,916
Real estate	5,614,434,940	470,838,189	155,379,331
IV. Means of transport	1,164,358,498	103,780,504	1,400,007
V. Moveable property	2,129,809,815	233,383,904	108,763,729
VI. Foreign claims	49,720,977	401,807	1,735,703
Total gross national wealth	8,958,324,230	808,404,404	267,278,770
Foreign creditors	1,021,588,088	110,613,346	31,338,189
Net national wealth	**7,936,736,142**	**697,791,058**	**235,940,581**

There was no single economic policy characterising the whole period, as the challenges resulting from the economic situation required various responses from economic policymakers. For the Horthy era as a whole, the number of finance ministers was almost twenty, and István Bethlen – shortly after his appointment as prime minister – also filled this position temporarily for a couple of months. Of course, the finance ministry was not alone in shaping economic policy, as other sectoral economic ministries also contributed. Therefore, in addition to examining developments over time, a thematic approach also seems reasonable, which can be illustrated methodologically by describing the relevant challenge and the responses.

Economic consolidation: 1920–1925[13]

One important reference point for economic policy was the League of Nations. On the one hand, this was due to the looming economic problems, and on the other hand, due to economic reconstruction. Economic and financial consolidation in Austria and Hungary posed a special problem. During this period, the most important challenge was to restore the economy and establish equilibrium in public finances. Obtaining a loan from the League of Nations was the instrument to achieve this. There was an example for Hungary to follow, since after the final negotiations Austria was granted a nominal loan of net 650 million gold crowns by the League of Nations in May 1923. After attempts by finance ministers Lóránt Hegedűs and then Tibor Kállay, not only financial experts (János Teleszky, Alajos Szabóky), but the prime minister also came to realise that foreign loans were needed to stabilise the economy.[14]

At the end of the first fiscal year, it became clear that roughly one quarter of the loan was sufficient for public finances to be in a state of equilibrium.

Amidst the internal political consolidation, Bethlen did not want to ruin public support for the system by taking unpopular measures, such as raising taxes. Nor did the introduction of a wealth tax seem feasible.

As a first step, in April 1923 Hungary requested the release of liens from the Reparations Commission. Initially, after lengthy negotiations following the League of Nations' commitment to issue a loan at the end of September 1923, the Reparations Commission wanted to apply part of the loan to reparations. As the first step, accompanied by a group of experts, Sir Arthur Salter, head of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations, arrived in Budapest at the beginning of November. Salter consulted with Hungarian experts and politicians on the economic situation. During the discussions, it became clear that, as in Austria, the most important tasks in Hungary were to stabilise the national currency, establish budgetary and trade equilibrium, halt inflation and set up

13 Szávai 2009.
14 Péteri 2003.

an independent central bank with exclusive issuance rights. The delegation was of the opinion that the necessary measures required a reconstruction loan issued under the auspices of the League of Nations and suggested that a commissioner in charge accountable to the Financial Committee be appointed to guarantee implementation. The position of the Commissioner-General was filled by Jeremiah Smith.[15]

As a result of negotiations, the parties concerned signed Protocol I-II of the reconstruction plan in Geneva on 15 March 1924. The reconstruction plan was similar to that signed by Austria, and the Committee undertook responsibility for the execution thereof. The economic programme is basically contained in Protocol II, which provides detailed guidance on curbing inflation, stabilising the domestic currency and setting up an independent Hungarian central bank. Furthermore, it provides for the extension of a reconstruction loan amounting to 250 million gold crowns with the purpose of covering the budgetary deficit up until 30 June 1926. The bulk of the loan (168 million gold crowns) was provided by Great Britain, with much smaller amounts contributed by the USA, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Sweden.[16]

On this occasion, the Hungarian government asked for permission to spend the portion of the League of Nations loan which was not necessary to safeguard budgetary equilibrium and the budgetary surplus on reviving investment activity, which by then had already been suspended for 10 years. This was approved by the League of Nations in 1925 up to a certain amount. As opposed to the view widespread a few decades ago, namely that the League of Nations loan was spent on prestige projects, it seems more likely that part of it served investment purposes. This is supported by annual budgetary figures, but also by Act XLII of 1928,[17] which by virtue of its provisions wished to strengthen the process launched during the term of the League of Nations loan, namely establishing equilibrium in public finances and reinforcing the economy.

15 Péteri 1985.
16 Ruttkay 1939, p. 265.
17 Ezer év törvényei 1928.

In fiscal 1928–1929, discussions focused on the residual portion of the loan to be paid off in instalments (I) and the investments due and authorised at the end of the fiscal year to be funded from the surplus revenue (II), the contents of which are presented in the table:

Table 3.

I. Investment to be funded pursuant to section 3(a) of Act IV of 1924 (League of Nations loan)	Construction of postal and telegraph offices, commercial and industrial ports, public roads and bridges, housing, railway investments	**Pengő** **39,300,000**
II. Investment from amounts payable in 1928/1929 and to be funded from the surplus revenue of the fiscal year 1927/1928 and the principal and interest repayment on loans authorised to be spent on investment	Reconstruction of royal buildings, ministerial buildings, archives, police headquarters, increase of equity, expansion of the state printing office, retail loan, development of air traffic, agricultural development, support for milk cooperatives, reconstruction of vineyards in Tokaj, development of hospitals, potable water, construction and support of schools, investment in state-owned iron, steel and machinery plants, investment in state-owned coal mines	**90,000,000**
	I-II together	**129,300,000**

Economic upswing: 1926–1929

The success of Hungarian economic policy was reflected by the fact that the first fiscal year following disbursement of the loan (1 July 1924 to 30 June 1925) featured an extremely positive balance. Budgetary equilibrium made it possible to relaunch trade activities. In contrast to the previous budgetary deficit, the country closed the period with a surplus of 63 million gold crowns.

In the second fiscal year, this success story continued. Commissioner-General Smith considered Hungary's currency to be stable and safe, and he was also of the opinion that the country had managed to come close to budgetary equilibrium. Part of the loan was spent on reorganising public administration.

There was an upswing on the labour market as well. In the second fiscal year after the loan, the number of unemployed decreased by one fourth in the course of one year, even though a large number of civil servants were dismissed due to the reorganisation of public administration. The mandate of the Commissioner-General expired in June 1926. The 253.8 million gold crowns received in the form of the loan was not only sufficient to cover the budgetary deficit, but had also enabled large-scale state investments.

The real importance of the loan provided by the League of Nations was the role it played in the reconstruction of the economy, while at the same time opening up opportunities for foreign capital investment.

The loan was placed primarily on foreign financial markets in the form of bonds. Placing these bonds primarily on the London and New York Stock Exchanges was relatively easy at a low exchange rate and a high interest rate. The bonds were issued in seven denominations, in addition to the Hungarian currency. In 1924, the financial situation was better than expected, with a higher growth rate.[18]

Economic crisis: 1930–1938

After the recovery of the Hungarian economy and the economic upswing, economic policymakers had a new challenge to face: the downturn in production and the unemployment caused by the global economic crisis. Similarly to European tendencies, Hungarian economic policy also used state intervention as an instrument to respond to the crisis. Most countries had no other tools at their disposal. Several countries in the region had accumulated considerable amounts of short- and medium-term debt, and British and American creditors started to quickly withdraw these credits. The termination of loan agreements became more frequent after the bankruptcy of Creditanstalt (1931). The process was followed by the closure of banks, and the stock exchange also closed.

18 Rádóczy 1984, pp. 23–25.

The competition between French and British loans and the German market was won by the latter. The French, British and Czech economic plans had the intention of putting the five countries along the Danube under one umbrella; however, these plans fell through, either due to the opposition of the Little Entente or that of the Great Powers.

To serve as a solution, a grain voucher system (known as the 'boletta' system) was introduced in Hungary in July 1930 in order to counter the rapidly falling prices of agricultural products; this system remained in effect for four years. Specifically, the state provided a price subsidy of 3 to 6 pengős for each quintal (100kg) of cereals sold by obliging the customer to pay one voucher per quintal (with a value fluctuating between 3 and 6 pengős in the aforementioned years), which then could be used by the seller as tax relief when paying taxes. However, this was only the beginning, as a new wave of state intervention started from 1934, when the state started to monopolise trade by monopolising the commercial activities related to agricultural produce through semi-state-owned cooperatives.

The agro-industrial countries of the region, such as Hungary and Poland, were hit hard. The sectors impacted the worst by the industrial crisis in Hungary were sectors which manufactured capital goods, primarily the iron and steel industry, the construction materials industry and machinery manufacturing. When the low point was reached in 1932, their combined output amounted to 52% of the pre-crisis level (with machinery production falling to 45%, the production of crude iron to 10% and the production of iron ore to 20%). In this dramatic situation, the Hungarian economy was under very severe pressure to export, and thus loans were not viewed as a potential solution, but rather the necessity to acquire markets.[19]

In mid-August 1931, the decree on gold pengő was issued, stipulating that debts dating from before 15 August had to be paid in gold pengő. The other measure of great significance stipulated that payments in foreign currency could only be made and foreign loans could only be taken out with the permission of the National Bank of Hungary.

19 Berend & Ránki 1976.

There was no major decline in banks' balance sheet totals, but incomes plummeted during the crisis. The decrease in banks' capital absorption capacity also influenced their industrial relations. The central bank performed an increasing number of official tasks as an authority, conducting foreign trade in securities and the notification of gold stocks.

A significant change was visible after 1935, but even in 1938 net profits still fell short of the figures from 25 years earlier. Settlement of agricultural debts started in 1938. During the agricultural crisis, a huge number of agricultural producers became insolvent.

The state investment plan of 1938 increased the state's dominance in financial matters. From 1941, the financial needs of the wartime economy were increasingly met by issuing unsecured banknotes, and from 1944, this was nearly the only source of money.[20]

One basic question of wartime financial policy was the transition from the gold currency to the MEFO bond (labour voucher). With the transfer moratorium of 1931, Hungary did not abandon the system of the gold currency. One major step in this direction was the amendment of the statutes of the National Bank of Hungary after the financial review carried out by the League of Nations after the spring of 1938. The loan transactions, which were necessary to safeguard the equilibrium of public finances and meet the needs of the state on a continuous basis, naturally resulted in an increase in public debt. Of the public debt amounting to 7 billion pengős at the end of the war, 57% was linked to financing Hungary's participation in World War II.[21]

At the same time, the characteristics of the Hungary economy changed substantially, since – based on the census of 1910 – 19.2% of Hungary's territory and 16.9% of its population was transferred to Czechoslovakia, 19.5% of its territory and 19.8% of its population was transferred to Yugoslavia, and 31.4% of its territory and 25.1% of its population was received by Romania. In 1930–1931, 2.5 million ethnic Hungarians were registered in the three countries.[22]

20 Tomka 2000.
21 Csikós 1996, p. 105.
22 Elekes 1934.

All in all, due to the territorial changes from 2 November 1938 until mid-April 1941, Hungary's territory increased by 79,106 square kilometres, representing 24.6% of its pre-war territory, and the more than 4.5 million people constituted 24.6% of its pre-war population.[23]

Boom in military industry: 1938–1944

The crisis essentially transitioned into a boom for the military industry as the development of Hungary's military potential was put on the agenda. As in the European economy and even the American economy, the response to this challenge was the development of this industrial sector. At the same time, market acquisition was also indispensable: for the Hungarian economy one decisive objective was to increase agricultural exports and it also served as an instrument in this phase of economic development.[24] Wartime public expenditures provided to industry in the form of investment and orders amounted to 16 billion pengős in the period between 1938 and 1939. This accounted for 22% of Hungary's national income. The process was launched by the Győr Programme. However, it went far beyond that.

Speaking in Győr on 5 March 1938, Hungarian Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi announced the "one billion programme" to last for five years, which was conceived as a development programme for the military.

The programme was nothing more than the foundation for the military development programme named Huba, which was launched on 3 February. From the programme, 600 million pengős was directly earmarked for rearmament and 400 million pengős for indirect defence development. It was scheduled to last 5 years, and the first phase was planned to be implemented by the end of 1940 (this included the most urgent development). This meant launching research for military purposes, introducing wartime economic

23 Idem, p. 45; Tilkovszky 1982; Buday 1922.

24 On the gradual development of the German large-space economy (Großraumwirtschaft), see Domonkos 2017, pp. 9–21.

management in certain parts of Hungarian industry and supplying the army with the most essential weapons. In the second phase, the objective was to achieve a qualitative and quantitative development of a well-established army.

The 400 million pengős was used to finance the development of agriculture, transport, infrastructure and mining. The objective of the programme was to raise and spend 1 billion pengő in five years. This was planned to be financed from long- and short-term loans, combined with a one-off wealth tax. 400 million was to be provided from loans and 600 million from the one-off wealth tax.

The 400 million pengős to finance indirect expenditure was distributed as follows: 210 million was spent on infrastructure development, 20 million on agricultural development, 19 million on agricultural trade development and the development of services, 75 million on agricultural loans, 30 million on public education, 36 million on the supply of potable water and other social development, and the remaining 10 million was earmarked to finance mining and the exploration of raw materials.[25]

From the mid-1930s, the export pressure on the Hungarian economy was stronger and stronger, and markets for agricultural products had to be found. This coincided with the ambition of German economic policy to integrate the agricultural surplus of the region, including that of Hungary, into its own economy by operating a specific clearing system. The military industry boom was also in line with the "Neuer Plan" conceived to promote German economic rearmament and resolve foreign trade difficulties, which implemented total state control over the flow of international payments. The plan associated with Hjalmar Schacht strongly limited the quantity of imports and regulated the volume of total imports, but differed radically from previous trade principles: it was based on bilateral trade and payment agreements concluded with the most important commercial partners.

25 Kaposi 2002, pp. 317–320.

In contrast to previous practices, the quota-based system was supplemented with an export reimbursement system. This meant that the Hungarian government could spend 22 million pengős annually on price subsidies for agricultural products exported to Germany. This arrangement provided more favourable trading opportunities than the world price level. The export subsidy paid by the Hungarian government was reimbursed by Germany, i.e. the reimbursement by the German government from its own financial resources made it possible for Hungary to exploit and fully utilise the export quotas.

The trade agreement dated February 1934 was supplemented with a new payment agreement in March, according to which German importers paid the consideration for Hungarian products in marks to the Reichsbank for the National Bank of Hungary as the beneficiary. The Reichsbank handled the incoming amounts differently, broken down according to the types of Hungarian commodities exported. The National Bank of Hungary used these amounts to pay German exporters for deliveries.

They maintained the clearing system by means of which not the full amount, but only 90% of the consideration for Hungarian export was to cover the price of German deliveries, whereas the remaining 10% was at the disposal of the National Bank of Hungary on the so-called *conto ordinario*.[26]

The manufacturing index was steadily rising, and there was an 11% increase in 1940 after which it fell. However, the war against the Soviet Union triggered a second boom for the military industry. All of this also resulted in considerable wage increases.[27] The wartime expenditure of the state (in the form of investment and orders) amounted to 16 billion pengős between 1938 and 1939, accounting for 22% of Hungary's national income.

26 Ránki 1988, pp. 5–50.
27 Csikós 1996, p. 101.

Table 4. Increase in manufacturing during the war

Year	Manufacturing growth index
1938	100
1939	121
1940	133
1941	130
1942	135
1943	142

Source: Csikós Nagy 1996, p. 100.

During the second boom for the wartime economy, one instrument was the establishment of aircraft engine manufacturing in Hungary.[28]

State intervention was the most dominant in solving raw material and energy-related issues, and the production of raw material. In 1940 a decree was issued on blocking agricultural products. In 1941 fat also had to be surrendered, and pork fat, fats, bacon and cereals were rationed. In 1942 there was a significant increase in the amount of products requisitioned.

Trade in products was still monopolised. In 1942 a new system of surrendering goods was introduced, the so-called Jurcsek system, with the aim to make it possible for the state to have a constant amount of goods available. The surrender obligation was established based on the net income of the arable land registered: for each golden crown (a measurement unit of the quality of agricultural land) 50 kg of bread grains had to be surrendered. Debts to Germany were on the rise and already amounted to 2 billion pengős in 1944.[29]

In addition to the rearmament programme announced in Győr, the one billion programme to help agriculture intended to provide support for the sector in the spirit of a command economy. By 15 September 1941, Dániel

28 Szávai 2001.
29 Berend 1984, pp. 1131–1141.

Bánffy had introduced the plan to the representatives of the governing party. After consultation with individual ministries and adoption by the Council of Ministers and the Regent, the plan was submitted by the minister of agriculture to the House of Representatives on 12 December 1941. After its adoption by the Upper House, it was proclaimed as Act XVI of 1942.[30]

The essential purpose of the Act was to increase the productivity of Hungarian arable land and the quantity and quality of agricultural production, and thus boost national income. The Act intended to accomplish the objective by extending agricultural education and advisory services, granting allowances and preferences, ensuring the order of agricultural production and organising agricultural production and trade. The Act planned for the one billion pengős to be used over ten years.[31]

Together with German debts, military expenses also increased, rising by 20% in 1941, 28% in 1942, 35% in 1943 and 44% in 1944. The deficit rose from 100 million pengős in 1938 to 2 billion pengős in 1943. These deficits were managed with the help of loans. 42% of the growth in banknotes was caused by the debt payable to Germany. During the years of the war, this debt amounted to 4,765 million pengős, whereas the value of banknotes in circulation between 1938 and 1944 was 11,357 million pengős.[32]

In addition to manufacturing in factories, small industrial businesses remained significant with an employment rate of 35%. In several cases orders from large factories represented major orders for small industrial businesses.[33]

30 Pataky 1943, pp. 10–16.
31 Idem, pp. 39–40.
32 Berend & Ránki 1976, pp. 580–581.
33 Kaposi 2002, p. 294.

Summary

In Europe, there was a 30% drop in economic growth during World War I, but World War II resulted in a smaller setback. After World War I, it took 4 to 5 years for most countries to reach pre-war levels, which after 1945 took only 4 years. In Europe, the average growth rate was 1.8% between 1913 and 1929, and then 3.9% between 1920 and 1929, whereas between 1929 and 1938 it fell to a mere 1.1%. Compared to this, the average growth rate of the Hungarian national product was lower at 1.1% between 1913 and 1929, but was better in the period 1920–1929 at 5.2%, after which it corresponded exactly to the continental average.[34]

In Northern and Western Europe, economic performance improved at an increasing pace, especially after World War II, meaning that the average GDP per capita in those regions was two to three times higher than in Eastern European countries. This is partly due to earlier differences, and partly to the fact that growth rates in several Western European countries were higher than in Hungary. The most recent literature also makes attempts at a more refined description of the economy of the Horthy era, according to which – mostly based on Maddison's data – Hungary at the beginning of the 20th century approached the Western European economies to a small degree, with this process reaching its peak in the years of World War I, when the level of development in Hungary amounted to 60.4% of the Western European average. On the eve of the global economic crisis, it reached 57.1%, then in 1939 was at 58.3% of the Western European average, which was indicative of the level of relative economic development before World War I.[35] The data below served as the dataset for Chart 1.

34 Ambrosius & Hubbart 1986, p. 136.
35 Tomka 2011, pp. 101–179. Table on p. 168.

Table 5. GDP per capita in European countries, 1890–2000 (in 1990 Geary–Khamis international dollars)

	1890	1900	1910	1913	1920	1929	1930	1939	1950	1960	1970	1973	1980	1989	1990
United Kingdom	4009	4492	4611	4921	4548	5503	5441	6262	6939	8645	10767	12025	12931	16414	16430
France	2376	2876	2965	3485	3227	4710	4532	4793	5271	7546	11664	13114	15106	17730	18093
Netherlands	3323	3424	3789	4049	4220	5689	5603	5544	5996	8287	11967	13081	14705	16695	17262
Belgium	3428	3731	4064	4220	3962	5054	4979	5150	5462	6952	10611	12170	14467	16744	17197
Ireland	2225	2495	2736	2736	2533	2824	2897	3052	3453	4282	6199	6867	8541	10880	11818
Germany/BRD	2539	3134	3527	3833	2986	4335	4049	5549	4281	8463	11933	13152	15370	18015	18685
Austria	2443	2882	3290	3465	2412	3699	3586	4096	3706	6519	9747	11235	13759	16369	16905
Switzerland	3182	3833	4331	4266	4314	6332	6246	6360	9064	12457	16904	18204	18779	20931	21482
Sweden	2086	2561	2980	3096	2802	3869	3937	5029	6739	8688	12716	13494	14937	17593	17695
Denmark	2523	3017	3705	3912	3992	5075	5341	5993	6943	8812	12686	13945	15227	18261	18452
Finland	1381	1668	1906	2111	1846	2717	2666	3408	4253	6230	9577	11085	12949	16946	16866
Norway	1777	1937	2256	2501	2780	3472	3712	4516	5463	7208	10033	11247	15129	18177	18466
Itali	1667	1785	2332	2564	2587	3093	2918	3521	3502	5916	9719	10634	13149	15969	16313
Spain	1624	1786	1895	2056	2177	2739	2620	1915	2189	3072	6319	7661	9203	11582	12055
Hungary	1473	1682	2000	2098	1709	2476	2404	2838	2480	3649	5028	5596	6306	6903	6459
Czechoslovakia	1505	1729	1991	2096	1933	3042	2926	2882	3501	5108	6466	7041	7982	8768	8513
Poland	1284	1536	1690	1739		2117	1994	2182	2447	3215	4428	5340	5740	5684	5113

If we compare all of this to the level of development in the era of dualism, we can conclude that average growth rate of Hungarian GDP in the period 1924–1938 was 3.3%, which was considered remarkable in Europe at that time. Very interestingly, this exceeds the growth rate under dualism, which between 1870 and 1910 was approximately 2.3% in respect of the territory of present-day Hungary. All of this means that after stabilisation the Hungarian economy developed relatively quickly.[36] In the Horthy era, the economy also performed well in an international comparison and responded adequately to the challenges. The loss of wealth and income in 1920 significantly impacted the conditions and framework of economic output.

36 Kaposi 2010, p. 49.

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NÓRA SZEKÉR

GERMAN PRESSURE AND SECRET SOCIETIES BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN FRATERNAL COMMUNITY AND THE HUNGARIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Miklós Mester was a Member of Parliament under the Imrédy government and State Secretary for Public Education in the Sztójay and Lakatos governments as well as a member of two secret societies, the Hungarian Fraternal Community and the Hungarian Independence Movement. Speaking in 1986, Mester explained *"At that time, there were about a dozen secret, semi-secret and very closed societies with limited membership. Within these, it was virtually decided who would fill the leading positions, how the ruling party would be formed, who could run as representatives, who would be the prefects, sub-prefects, sheriffs, gendarmerie commanders, and who could be members of the Regent's narrow circle of advisers."*[1] Mester's lexicon-like biography suggests the outlines of a

1 The 1956 Institute's Oral History Archive (OHA). Miklós Mester – Interview No. 45, conducted by János Gyurgyák and Tamás Varga in 1986. p. 53, (hereinafter: Mester – interview).

strongly pro-German, "reactionary" politician. However, a deeper analysis of his life, including his role in the two secret societies, alters this impression significantly.[2]

Mester was born in 1906 in Rugonfalva (today: Rugăneşti, Romania), in the former Udvarhely County, to a Reformed family. His parents cultivated twenty acres of land, which permitted them to support their son's higher education. In 1937, as a student of Benedek Jancsó,[3] he received his doctorate in history. In his doctoral dissertation, he dealt with the issue of Transylvanian autonomy, breaking with the contemporary official idea of a great revision. In his book entitled *Autonóm Erdély* [Autonomous Transylvania][4] published in 1936, true to the spirit of the poem *Dunánál* [At the Danube] by Attila József that he had chosen as his motto, he takes an open stance in favour of the national and ethnic equality of the peoples living together along the Danube. He became a member of the Hungarian Fraternal Community during his university years. He started his career in politics in 1939, and the personal connections he established in this society contributed greatly to the advancement of such. At the proposal of society member Ferenc Zsindely, he was nominated as a parliamentary representative of the ruling party led by Pál Teleki. Mester recalls, *"As a Member of Parliament, I pushed for two things. Agrarian reform, and then, after Hungary had regained its former territories, the issue of nationalities.* [...] *Teleki rejected my proposals in both of these matters."*[5] Mester claimed that this was the reason why he left the ruling party and joined the faction of the Party of Hungarian Renewal, since this party promised radical social reforms and was backed by a team of economic experts including the prestigious Béla Imrédy. In his memoirs written in 1986, Mester also emphasises that it is wrong to try to understand the

2 For an analysis of Mester's life, see Szekér 2013; Mester 2012, 2018.

3 Benedek Jancsó (1854–1930): educator, minority policy and national history writer. Head of the Nationalities Department of the Bánffy Government, Nationalities Lecturer at the Austro-Hungarian Military Command in Bucharest in 1917 and 1918. From 1922, professor of the Ferenc József University of Szeged and a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His field of research was the population history and political and ideological movements of the Romanians in Transylvania.

4 Mester 1937.

5 Mester – interview, p. 64.

commitment to a party in Hungary between the two world wars based upon the political conditions of the 1980s. *"One thing must be said honestly: regarding the ideological approach, a previously unknown culture emerged after 1945. People today cannot understand that I was a member of Imrédy's party, but I was very far from the persons sitting next to me. Imrédy never made suggestions about how things should be viewed. No one was required to have certain ideas about anything; such a thing simply didn't exist."*[6]

On 19 March 1944, German troops occupied Hungary, and a government loyal to the Germans was formed under the leadership of Döme Sztójay. Mester was appointed State Secretary by this government. However, he was not pro-German, but rather an undercover agent of the resistance. His appointment as State Secretary was the result of the work of anti-Nazi forces, the Hungarian Community and the Hungarian Independence Movement, as well as a myriad of personal and institutional connections. In this position, he enjoyed the approval and support of the Reformed Church and László Ravasz, as well as of the Transylvanian Party, Ferenc Herczeg, Ferenc Zsindely and Endre Fall, and of opposition politicians active in the resistance such as Zoltán Tildy and Endre Bajcsy Zsilinszky.[7]

What did it mean in practice to be part of a pro-German government as a confidante of anti-German forces? Mester explains, *"A State Secretary for Religion and Public Education should have taken serious cultural policy measures, but at that time this was out of question. People's lives were at stake, and I was dealing with issues in an unusual way."*[8] It had to be ensured that neither the Prime Minister nor the ministers became aware of any measure or plan directed against the Germans; the only possibility was to act in accordance with the rules of conspiracy. Mester's work was mainly guided by Gyula Ambrózy, head of the Regent's cabinet office, with whom Mester was in direct contact. Ambrózy also acted as a liaison between Regent Horthy and the anti-

6 Mester – interview, p. 24.
7 Bokor & Mester 1982, p. 143.
8 Mester – interview. p. 82.

German groups.[9] Mester's main responsibility was the rescue of Hungarian Jews; this task was all the more suitable for him given that during his previous work he had formed personal relationships with many of the leading figures in the Jewish community.[10] News of abuse and brutality against the Jews were reported to the leaders of the Jewish Council, who passed on this information to Mester. *"I immediately went to the cabinet office with the news, telling them what had happened and that they should take action. And they did."*[11] The letters of exemption issued by Mester saved the lives of a considerable number of Jewish people. *"We kept pondering what could be done in those conditions. There was a contingent for issuing exemptions reserved for the Minister of the Interior. It was Ambrózy's idea that it would be the best if the Regent himself obtained the right to issue exemptions. Now, a certain constitutional procedure had to be played out in order for the Regent to obtain this right, and to be able to exercise it without restriction.* [...] *But an impossible situation arose here, as the Council of Ministers* [...] *said that the names had to be disclosed. This meant that the idea of exemptions was impossible to carry out.* [...] *Now, Ambrózy and I had another idea: people who submitted their request for exemption would receive a letter with a ministerial seal and the letterhead of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, stating that they had submitted a request for exemption, the exemption is in progress, and they are under the Regent's protection.* [...] *We issued many such letters, which affected about thirty thousand people in total."*[12]

In addition to rescuing Jews, Mester – as the patron of the Györffy College – also did much for the protection of college members who were in contact with the illegal Communist Party, and he personally advocated for the release of Gyula Sipos and future Prime Minister András Hegedüs. He also took part in organising the exit from the war. After the Arrow Cross coup, an arrest warrant was issued against him, and thus he had to flee. Using fake identity documents, he hid in Klastrompuszta and then in Bethesda Hospital in Budapest until the end of the siege.

9 For more details, see Haraszti 32007. p. 271.
10 On Mester's rescue work, see also Schmidt 1990.
11 Mester – interview. p. 85.
12 Mester – interview. pp. 86–90.

As mentioned above, the two secret societies (the Hungarian Fraternal Community and the Hungarian Independence Movement) provided important background assistance in the resistance work. However, before I begin to introduce these two organisations, it is necessary to briefly return to Mester's statement quoted in the introduction, in which he emphasises that *a dozen secret, semi-secret, and very closed, exclusive memberships* played a decisive role in the political life of that period. He continues by explaining that the *National Casino* and the *Hungarian Casino* were the meeting places of the highest circles of the social elite, whose members made decisions regarding the top positions and the appointment of ministers and state secretaries. He names the *Etelköz Association* (referred to as EX or EKSZ) as the secret society with the most influential and extensive network of contacts.[13]

The EX was already a force to be reckoned with during the consolidation of the political system of the Horthy era, and it provided an apparatus layer loyal to the system throughout the entire period. Exponents of the association were also present in a fairly large number in the Parliament, public administration, the judiciary system and among the army officers; an appropriate EX recommendation was indispensable for filling certain positions. In addition to influencing public offices, it coordinated the large number of social organisations and associations of the period as the top connecting background body. In the words of Dezső Szabó, the EX operated in the spirit of a secret fraternity, and – as a background power loyal to the regime – its activity was closely intertwined with daily politics. The power relations, divisions and guidelines within the elite were also reflected within the EX. The initially radically irredentist and anti-Semitic alignment of the organisation became less pronounced in the period of consolidation during the Bethlen government. Under the prime ministership of Gyula Gömbös, one of the key figures of the Association, the supporters of the German orientation and a more radical tone became dominant. The members were divided on the basis of their relationship to the far right and Hitler's politics, but the leaders of the Association essentially supported loyalty to the utmost to the German alliance.

13 Fodor 2008; Szekér 2017, pp. 80–81.

The EX background present in the military and public sector also played a role in the success of the Arrow Cross Party's accession to power. At the same time, a group of people associated with the EX took a strong anti-German stance and also supported the Regent in organising the exit from the war.[14] Thus, the EX was the offspring of the political system of the Horthy era, and its activities also depended on it; after the collapse of the system, it lost its purpose and ceased to exist.

Mester does not mention either the Community or the Independence Movement when listing the secret societies serving as the background of the governing power structure, given that these two organisations had completely different foundations. Their activities were discussed by Mester when the conversation turned to resistance to Nazism.[15]

Founded in the early 1920s after the Treaty of Trianon, by intellectuals who had moved to Hungary from Transylvania, the Hungarian Community revived the traditions of a several centuries old secret society linked to struggles for the independence of Transylvania.[16] Its aim was to enforce Hungarian interests and Hungarian sovereignty more effectively. In the case of the Community, this was not only an international and domestic political endeavour, but also a struggle for "internal independence", where sovereignty also meant ensuring, in both spiritual and existential terms, autonomous self-assertion and the opportunity for a good quality of life for all strata of society. As such, the endeavour also undertook a social programme which, between the two world wars, related the Community to the ideology of writers of the popular movement, and also made it open to opposition groups rejecting the Horthy regime. At the same time, it must be emphasised that the Community was not specifically associated with any political party or ideology. It did not work out a programmatic guideline of what it considered to be the right way to enforce Hungarian interests; instead, it aimed to leave the possibilities open to many different alternatives. Also, given that the Community functioned in the manner of a movement organised from the bottom up, members were not entrusted with specific tasks or action

14 Fodor 2008, p. 155.
15 Mester – interview, p. 64.
16 For more details, see Szekér 2017, pp. 58–107.

plans developed by the organisation. It was due to the bottom-up nature of the movement that it emphatically functioned in the spirit of self-organisation. As Károly Kiss, the leader of the Community explained in his statement to the State Protection Department (AVO) in 1947, "*After filling a position, each member was expected to realise the ideas of the Community through their individual actions.* [...] *If one has embraced the ideas of the Community, we found it natural that he would work in this spirit, instead of upon some express request.*"[17] Members were inaugurated if they were seen as committed to Hungarian ideals and willing to act for the benefit of the community. From this point on, however, every member could promote the "cause of Hungarians" according to their own conscience, and the Community – primarily through its network of contacts – merely provided a background for their activity.

Therefore, the basic position of the Community was not to reject any political direction; in fact, it was open to all social organisations and political groups from the right to the left wing, and it tried to strengthen the principles and guidelines it represented within these groups. Through its approximately 4,000–5,000 body of members organised in cells, it had extensive contacts to parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, social organisations and institutions, regardless of political affiliation. However, the Community rejected on principle any aspirations that jeopardised Hungarian sovereignty. Consequently, it opposed the German, and then, after the war, the Soviet imperial politics as a baseline position. As a result, from the mid-1930s onwards the Community increasingly considered its mission to counter Nazism, and its members were called to action in the same spirit.

The organisational framework of the Hungarian Independence Movement was ensured, on the one hand, by Prime Minister Pál Teleki's secret practical activities against imperial Germany performed in the open political arena, and on the other hand by the work of the so-called Circle of Five.[18] The formation of

17 Budapest City Archives (BFL) XXV. 1.a. 1837/1947. 548. d., Testimony of Károly Kiss, 17 January 1947.

18 Ráday Archives (RL) C_80, 2. d. Szent-Iványi, D. n.d. (hereinafter: The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement), Szekér 2017, pp. 187–189.

the Circle of Five "resistance cell" started from 1937–1938 with the participation of economist Gábor Forintos, diplomat Kálmán Kossuth, gendarmerie detective Lajos Kudar, Captain of the 2nd General Staff of the Armed Forces Lajos Pados and university professor Barna Kiss, who was also one of the leaders of the scout movement. *"Managing director Forintos represented the economic and Christian political lines, Kossuth dealt with the affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and partly of the Prime Minister's Office), and tried to compile and evaluate the situation of the foreign policy on a regular basis. Kudar and Pados dealt with the issues of the army and the gendarmerie (including the Ministry of the Interior) and were also in charge of the news services. Professor Kiss kept in touch with academia and youth movements,"*[19] summarised Domokos Szent-Iványi, the future leader of the Hungarian Independence Movement, explaining the responsibilities of the members of the Circle in his 1946 study on resistance.

The creation of the Circle was motivated on the one hand by the continuous strengthening of Hitler's power, and on the other hand by the realisation that National Socialist ideas had found a significant following in Hungary.[20] By the beginning of 1939, the Circle had prepared its "work plan" adapted to the existing conditions. The starting point was the assessment of the situation, according to which war was inevitable and – in the opinion of the members – it was not going to lead to an overwhelming German victory. However, they saw that open separation from the Germans was not possible for Hungary, as it would have led to military occupation. The best interest of the country, in their view, was to avoid entering the war which was imminent due to the German influence – but the Circle of Five did not see much chance of that either. Pro-German attitude was strong in influential political and military circles, but at the same time, according to a 1939 evaluation, *"the old anti-Nazi liberal set – István Bethlen, Gyula Károlyi, Lajos Walkó, Károly Rassay, etc. – had lost*

19 RL C_80, 2. d. The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement. p. 60.

20 In 1937, Szálasi's motto was, "1938! This year is ours!" His support peaked in 1938–1939, when his party grew to approximately 25,000-30,000 members. In the 1939 elections, candidates of various National Socialist parties won 25% of the votes, and thus, with 49 seats, they became the largest opposition group in the Parliament. For more details on the election, see László Tamás Vizi's study published in this volume.

much of their prestige (especially in relation to land reform and social problems in general), so as a result, and despite being specifically anti-Axis, they will be unable to prevent the country from drifting into war."[21] Since Hungarian society also did not have a united view on the German issue, open confrontation would not only have carried the danger of occupation, but also of civil war. As a result, it was considered necessary to prepare for long years of continuously increasing Nazi German influence, and under the given circumstances, counterbalancing the German orientation was believed to be possible if managed primarily from the background.

Their idea was to build an influential relationship system based on personal acquaintances. Teleki, with whom the members of the Circle had a friendly relationship, was seen as the main coordinator of this system of relations: *"In the summer of 1939, the Circle of Five began work in full force. First of all, it established contacts with Pál Teleki's closest friends and colleagues (Kálmán Darányi, István Bárczy, Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, Domokos Szent-Iványi, Minister of Industry József Vargha, Ferenc Zsindely, Baron Dániel Bánffy and others) and maintained close connections and cooperation with them. Unfortunately, Kálmán Darányi died in October 1939 and thus his support was lost. At the same time, the 'Five' entered into the closest contact with certain bodies and groups of the army (Chief of 2nd Defence Staff: Koffa, Def., Special, Registry) and the gendarmerie (Investigation Department). The 'Five' were closely related to the 9th Department of the Ministry of the Interior (Ministerial Advisor József Antall)."*[22]

Relying on the Circle of Five and in conformity with the plans of the Circle, Teleki organised two departments of the Prime Minister's Office in the summer of 1939: the 4th Information Department (ME IV.) under the leadership of Domokos Szent-Iványi and the National Political Service (ME V.) directed by Professor Béla Kovrig. Sándor Molnár, an associate involved in both legal and illegal activity, recalls that[23] the National Political Service *"carries out social and*

21 RL C_80, 2. d. The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement. p. 153.
22 RL C_80, 2. d. The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement. p. 153.
23 On the operation of the National Policy Service, see Hámori 1997; Ablonczy 2005, pp. 483–485; Molnár 2001; Nyári 2015, pp. 96–104. On the activity of Béla Kovrig, see Petrás 2019.

literary political activities on the outside, but on the inside, the underground, it will be the secret workshop of the most ruthless anti-Nazi, anti-German and anti-Arrow Cross propaganda war."[24] The officially defined task of the department was to deal with problems of ethnic regions and Hungarians living in other countries on the one hand, and with supporting cultural life on the other. Meanwhile, under the cover of the department, illegal publications of Nazi counter-propaganda were produced and distributed. According to Sándor Molnár's recollection, thirty to forty thousand leaflets were printed and distributed per week, within the framework of the strictest conspiracy. Thanks to the secret organisational work of the department several books were published, including Lajos Iván's book *Németország háborús esélyei a német szakirodalom tükrében* [Germany's Chances in the War in Light of German Scientific Literature], which in 1939 already predicted – citing economic factors – the probability that Germany would lose the war, and Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's book entitled *Helyünk és sorsunk Európában* [Our Place and Fate in Europe].[25]

Teleki removed the management of matters related to information on foreign affairs from the scope of duties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was basically pursuing a German-oriented policy, and transferred it to the competence of the Information Department.[26] This became the official scope of activities of the department, in addition to the management of Teleki's private and scientific relations abroad. These measures created an opportunity to bypass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and build an alternative system of foreign relations and an Entente-friendly line of foreign affairs. Besides this, the Information Department maintained direct contact with all ministries, public administration bodies and major social and scientific organisations, considering that this was necessary *"in order to ensure the harmonisation of Hungarian aspirations abroad"*.[27] The contact person was appointed by the

24 Molnár 2001, p. 40.

25 Molnár 2001, pp. 80–83.

26 On the establishment and operation of the Information Department, see Szent-Iványi 2013, 196–202.

27 Excerpt from the circular issued by Teleki on 28 August 1939. RL C_80, 2. d. The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement, p. 143.

Department, taking into account the person's worldview. In this way, it was possible to establish a network of anti-Nazi contacts that had ties to the entire Hungarian institutional system and provided the legal framework for contact between the Prime Minister and the anti-Nazi forces.

After Teleki's death, both departments of the Prime Minister's Office were abolished. However, the circle of contacts organised under the auspices of the Information Department continued their activities under the name of Hungarian Independence Movement.[28] In this new form, the Hungarian Independence Movement continued to attempt to coordinate the activities of anti-Nazi forces, but still did not establish, either secretly or legally, an organisational structure. The Hungarian Independence Movement did not have organisational and operational statutes, and its members were not registered; it merely coordinated a network of contacts led by Domokos Szent-Iványi and involving a few dozen more people, without a true organisational framework. Due to this form of operation, the insiders also called the network the "Teleki Nebula". By May 1946, the "operators" of the Independence Movement had compiled a report entitled *A Magyar Függetlenségi Mozgalom őszinte története* [The Honest History of the Hungarian Independence Movement]. The confidential summary of the nature and secrecy of the operations states the following: *"The Hungarian Independence Movement never meant to be a separate party or faction, but an action committee that sought to locate all anti-German Hungarian democratic forces and coordinate these in order to achieve the above goals.* [...] *The movement operated along several lines, but for the sake of secrecy, the various groups and individuals were not informed about the other groups' members or their work.* [...] [The background] *was always the operation of the Hungarian Independence Movement, even when those participating in its work had no idea about this.* [...] *The very close connection between the military and political lines was one of the main strengths of the organisation, and this was the key factor that enabled it to function with relatively high efficiency."*[29]

28 Szent-Iványi 2016, pp. 41–47; Szekér 2017, pp. 199–201.

29 RL C_80, 2. d. The True History of the Hungarian Independence Movement, p. 153.

To illustrate the significance of this circle of relationships, here are the names of several persons who collaborated within the framework of the Hungarian Independence Movement: Géza Shoos, leader of the Reformed youth movement Soli Deo Gloria; as Secretary of the Prime Minister, he was Szent-Iványi's alternate and most confidential colleague, was involved in the secret activities of the office and played a prominent role in the rescue of Jews. Szent-Iványi involved the Circle of Five in the work, along with its entire network of contacts. The network included Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, State Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office and then Minister of Trade Ferenc Zsindely, Minister of Agriculture Dániel Bánffy, and, also from the Prime Minister's Office, State Secretary István Bárczy, a personal friend of Miklós Horthy. In the Ministry of the Interior, members of the community Gábor Benczur-Ürmössy, László Osváth and József Antall, Sr. were in direct contact with Szent-Iványi. The contact group included former Prime Minister István Bethlen and, from the Regent's entourage, Head of the Regent's Cabinet Office Gyula Ambrózy and Commander of the Hungarian Royal Guard Károly Lázár. In terms of British relations, the person of Professor C.A. Macartney, the Oxford historian is very significant.[30] Macartney, of Irish descent, was a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) from 1926, as an expert on the issue of Central and Eastern Europe. He was the main theorist of the view that an ethnic-based adjustment of the Treaty of Trianon was necessary. At the beginning of 1940, he came to Hungary on behalf of the Foreign Research and Press Service (a semi-official advisory body of the Intelligence and Analysis Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and a close relationship developed between him and Domokos Szent-Iványi. Their relationship of trust is revealed by the fact that in 1946, before his arrest, Szent-Iványi entrusted Macartney with the safe-keeping of the documents on the diplomacy of the Horthy era that he had collected (these documents became some of the most important sources of Macartney's two-volume work on the era entitled *October Fifteenth*[31]). During his six years of expert work, Macartney

30 On Macartney's work, see Beretzky 2005, pp. 107–120.
31 Macartney 1956.

drafted 143 memoranda on the Danube Basin and Hungary, which significantly influenced the confederation-based concept supported by the Americans and, before the Soviet Union switched sides, had also been seen by British foreign policymakers as a realistic option for post-war regional planning.[32]

Close links were established with the secret services and law enforcement bodies along a number of lines, mostly thanks to cooperation with the Circle of Five. The members of the confidential circle were Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff Jenő Padányi (Ministry of Defence, Intelligence and Emergency Response Department); Gendarmerie Lieutenant Colonel Lajos Kudar; Oszkár Moór, head of the law enforcement team of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Chief Inspector of the gendarmerie Gábor Faragho; Gendarmerie Colonel Rajmund Ridegváry. Andorka Rudolf, the ambassador of Madrid, was also involved in the work. Due to the high importance of cultural relations, the organisation had a separate scientific group made up of scientists. It also had liaisons to social organisations and churches. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, who was supported by a significant network of contacts due to his openly anti-German stance, played a decisive role in the activity of the group.[33]

However, in order to work effectively, this diffuse operation also required a cover organ, the back-up support of some kind of established organisational structure. With the liquidation of the Information Department, the legal organisational framework linked to the state administration was lost. The Hungarian Independence Movement tried to compensate for this loss by building wider social relations. On the one hand, this was ensured by the connections to churches and social organisations established during the period

32 Beretzky 2005, p. 127.

33 Géza Paikert, Tibor Gerevich, Sándor Eckhardt and Tivadar Thienemann served as liaisons to the Academy. The experts in cross-border cases were Béla Bokor, László Makkai, László Hadrovich, András Abonyi and Sándor Vajlok; László Pálinkás was the expert on Italian issues, István Bartha and Béla Teleki on German issues, and Adorján Divéky, István Mészáros and Sándor Borsitzky on Polish issues. The cartography experts were Péter K. Kovács and András Rónai, and the members of the Hungarian history group included Tibor Joó, Domokos Kosáry, Kálmán Benda, József Deér, Alajos Kovács and Árpád Markó. Szent-Iványi 2013, pp. 273–280.

of the Information Department, but the most effective and conspiratorial framework was established by the Hungarian Fraternal Community. The basis for cooperation between the Hungarian Independence Movement and the Hungarian Fraternal Community was the rejection of Hitler's policy by both organisations and the overlaps in membership (Lajos Kudar and Géza Soos played a key role in building this cooperation). The Community thus became a kind of secret cover organisation for the network of the Independence Movement. Thanks to this cooperation, the Hungarian Independence Movement was based on broad social foundations, organised membership and a conspiratorial background, while the Community had a network of contacts that reached the highest levels of political life. Special importance was conferred on this joint work by the fact that the Hungarian Independence Movement left the framework of the political elite and the state administration, and the cooperation between the two organisations combined the anti-Nazi aspirations of the elite with those of the wider circles of Hungarian society. Thus, the movement brought together certain political and social groups whose work would have been impossible to coordinate in the open arena.

On 19 March 1944, German troops occupied Hungary. The German military intervened directly in political life, public life and all areas of everyday life. The government was replaced, and a hunt was launched for Jews and those opposed to Nazism. The new conditions meant new tasks, opportunities and dangers for the resistance. In this situation, a more organised and top-down form of anti-German work became necessary. At this point the bottom-up, movement-based community suspended its organisational framework – or "went dormant" in conspiracy terms – while the Hungarian Independence Movement organised its previously network of contacts into a hierarchically structured organisational framework that was no longer self-organising but operated upon instructions and action plans developed from above. While in "peacetime" the Community served as the organisational backbone of the Hungarian Independence Movement, the situation had now changed: the newly established organisational framework of the Movement provided the institutional background for the communities involved in the resistance and their network of contacts.

In the new context of the occupation, the Independence Movement considered that – since Miklós Horthy's position as Regent continued to provide the legitimate authority needed for a separate peace – the realistic possibility in the struggle against Germans was not an armed fight, but the preparation of an exit from the war. To organise this, the Hungarian Independence Movement had at its disposal the so-called Special Office (referred to by posterity only as the Exit Office) and a coordinated system of contacts reaching the highest levels of state power.

Here, a short digression is needed to explain the work of the Office. According to the recollection of Domokos Szent-Iványi, in the summer of 1943 the members of the Hungarian Independence Movement decided to join the attempts of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay and become involved in organising the exit from the war on a practical level.[34] This decision was prompted primarily by the fact that much information came into the possession of the Movement, according to which German retaliation was to be expected due to Kállay's "suspicious" policy, which would primarily affect the government, but presumably the person and position of the Regent would remain safe. Therefore, the Movement developed an emergency plan independent of the government. As part of the plan, they set up the so-called Special Office on 10 January 1944. Miklós Horthy, Jr. was appointed as the head of the Office, and Domokos Szent-Iványi was assigned by credentials to organise the Office and coordinate its work. Officially, the Office handled the affairs of people wishing to re-establish their residence in Hungary, but in fact it was the cover body for organising the exit from the war. The institution was not under the control of the government, but under the direct control of the Regent. Just as the founding of the Office, the undercover exit attempts were secretly coordinated by the contact system of the Independence Movement.

The information received by the Hungarian Independence Movement proved to be true: the Germans did not want to change Horthy's role as Regent. The Office, as an institution under Horthy, did not come under German control

34 Szent-Iványi 2016, pp. 76–104.

even after the occupation, so it could remain a pillar of the resistance work, which basically had two directions: the exit and organising the rescue of people. In both activities, the Hungarian Independence Movement took advantage of the room for manoeuvre arising from the power of the Regent. After the occupation, the significance of the Independence Movement was assessed by Tibor Hám,[35] one of its members: "[the Hungarian Independence Movement] *was the closest to the concept of an underground government, since it was led by Szent-Iványi, the actual leader of young Horthy's Exit Office, and the majority of its associates were persons opposed to the German occupation who still held positions in the administration and army, including Horthy's entourage.*"[36] At the community level, the Hungarian Independence Movement also had the opportunity to reach out to anti-German social organisations and political groups.[37]

Mester's resistance work, focused mainly on rescuing the persecuted, is an example of cooperation of the "lower and upper levels". The work of writer János Kodolányi, who helped in organising the exit from the war, is another illustrative example of the coordination of the Community's social circles and the Independence Movement's elite circles.[38] Kodolányi was a member of the Community from the mid-1930s. It was a great support to his work that, as the organiser, secretary and editor of the writers' self-help organisation called

35 Tibor Hám (1914–1990), doctor, politician. In 1941 he was a founding member of the Pál Teleki Working Group, and later he became its president. He was also a member of the Independent Smallholders' Party from 1943. From 15 October 1944, he became a participant in the resistance line led by Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, and one of the organisers of the Hungarian Uprising Liberation Committee. He spent six weeks in the prison of the Arrow Cross Party. After 1945, he became the president of the Smallholders' Party of the 7th District of Budapest, and later, from April 1945 to March 1946, held the position of Lord-Lieutenant of Sopron County. From 4 November 1945, he became a member of Parliament as a representative of the Smallholders' Party. Within his party, he belonged to the group close to Ferenc Nagy, the so-called "Holy Innocents". In the lawsuit against the Hungarian Community, he was acquitted at the court hearing. He emigrated in 1948 and settled in the United States in 1951. He played an active political role in the emigration. He was a member of the National Committee. In 1966, he founded the Hungarian American Cultural Center. As an emigree, he earned a living from his medical practice.

36 Quoted by Saláta 1989, p. 96.

37 On the role of the Community in the resistance, see Kővágó 1994, pp. 16–17.

38 On the resistance activity of János Kodolányi, see Szekér n.d.

the Writers' Economic Association and of several newspapers, he had insight into the system of relationships organised on the basis of intellectual identity. Kodolányi was a permanent employee of the periodical *Magyar Élet* [Hungarian Life], a magazine of national significance published with the covert support of the Community. A section of the magazine, entitled *Esti beszélgetések* [Evening Talks], was one of the defining writings of the paper. The Community also supported the publication of the daily newspaper *Tiszántúl* [Trans-Tisza], edited with the participation of Kodolányi. Zoltán Bay, a renowned scientist and member of the Community, recalls in a letter he wrote 1988: *"The Hungarian Community had a cell at the University of Technology, which was led by my colleague István Náray Szabó. The members of the cell were mainly professors of the University of Technology, but some of them, including János Kodolányi, were outsiders.* [...] *Apart from a collegial relationship, Náray Szabó and I were great friends.* [...] *In the 1941–1942 academic year, he was appointed Dean of the Faculty, which brought him a considerable income. He told me that he would donate his entire Dean's salary to support the goals of the Community, and especially to buy the 'Tiszántúl', which could then be moved to the capital. János Kodolányi became the leading editor of 'Tiszántúl'.* [...] *Therefore, the organisation behind the 'Tiszántúl' was actually the Hungarian Community.* [...] *My friend István also took part in the organisation of the Community at a higher level,* [...] *and he donated his dean's income to give voice to the threatened Hungarian national consciousness during the vigorous organisation of the Arrow Cross Party occurring at that time."*[39]

Kodolányi's activities with the Community's newspapers were also facilitated by the fact that he was regarded as a trusted insider. Furthermore, he was also of paramount importance in the life of the Community, given that he undertook to write materials meant to guide the spirit of the organisation and to set out its ideological principles. Therefore, he was seen by many of the members as the main spiritual leader of the Community.[40]

39 Zoltán Bay's letter to Mária G. Merca. Washington, 9 April 1988. Csűrös 2001, pp. 57–58.

40 Cf. Testimony of Antal Gyenes, 18 January 1947. Historical Archives of the State Security Services (HASSS) 3.1.9 V-2000/33. 196; Testimony of János Tóth, 23 February 1947 HASSS 3. 1. 9. V-2000/20. p. 196.

He warned emphatically, not only in the internal materials of the Community but also in his public writings, about the dangers of Nazism: *"Since 1933, I have considered the German danger more threatening than any other issue. I concentrated all my abilities against it.* [...] *And as the German pressure grew, so did my anxiety, my anger, and then my despair. But I reckoned that* [...] *we should not let others make a revolution, a workers' movement, democracy or an anti-German movement; instead, we should make these ourselves,"*[41] he confessed in his 1945 essay entitled *Szilveszteri számvetés* [New Year's Eve Account]. For Kodolányi, resistance meant mainly intellectual struggle up until the German occupation, and it was mostly aimed at raising awareness of the shallowness of Nazi ideology and the true nature of German imperial aspirations.

As one of the leaders of the anti-German intellectual movement, on 19 March Kodolányi was added to the list of those to be arrested. Colonel General Gábor Faragho, Chief Inspector of the Gendarmerie and Police and one of the leading figures of the Independence Movement, took immediate action to protect him. A few days after the occupation, he had a confidential meeting with Kodolányi in his apartment on Naphegy Street.[42] Here, he provided him with a secret identification document, and they discussed what could realistically be done under the given circumstances. *"We instructed him to organise a group of Hungarian writers that would include everyone whose trustworthiness he was convinced of, and encourage them into spiritual resistance against the Sztójay government. Based on the discussion with us, he was requested to draft a memorandum on the foreign and domestic political, military and cultural situation of the country, and explain the methods that could be used to organise internal resistance effectively and efficiently,"* Faragho wrote in his 1945 testimony, aiming to clear Kodolányi.

At Faragho's suggestion, Kodolányi retreated to his summer home in Akarattya. *"Faragho instructed the gendarmerie in Kenes to keep an eye on our house at all times, and if they learned that my father was going to be arrested*

41 János Kodolányi: Szilveszteri számvetés; Csűrös 2001, pp. 139–140.
42 Kodolányi 1988, p. 123.

by the Germans, they were to forestall them and arrest my father themselves,"[43] recalls Júlia, the writer's daughter. But as Kodolányi himself expressed in his writing *Szilveszteri számvetés* [New Year's Eve Account], *"I lived in retreat at Akarattya, but I was not exactly idle."*[44] He tried to maintain as close contact as possible with his like-minded friends, and on 2 June 1944 he convened a conspiratorial meeting of writers at 20 Rákóczi Street to discuss political positions and harmonise the proper behaviour of writers. Kodolányi suggested to those present that since the Sztójay government was unconstitutional, they should not take part in public life under the German puppet government.[45]

Kodolányi received his most important mandate from the Independence Movement in mid-July 1944. At a confidential meeting held at Faragho's farm at Kohárimajor with the participation of Domokos Szent-Iványi, Kodolányi was involved in the preparation of the armistice talks and was charged with drafting a memorandum on the necessary political and social measures. *"One day* [Faragho] *had me taken in his car to a confidential meeting held at his place.* [...] *We analysed the world's political situation, the balance of power, the military situation and the frightening mass of internal troubles and difficulties of the Hungarians.* [...] *It was then that I learned who were the generals that wanted to steer the country in a radically different direction. The difficulties seemed insurmountable. We could hardly see a way out of the impasse. It was then that I was commissioned to draft a memorandum on how I see the state of the country as a writer, and what I think should be done to recover from the disaster that threatened us with extermination. It took me two days of feverish work at Akarattya to write the memorandum. At the time, I considered it the most important to immediately turn the country into 'a party capable of negotiating'.* [...] *I recommended direct action,* [...] *and the most radical internal reforms and democracy to ensure immediate exit from the war.* [...] *Later, a representative of the young Horthy approached me and told me that the memorandum was in his hands and that the secret operation was launched."*[46]

43 Kodolányi 1988, p. 124.
44 Csűrös 2001, p. 141.
45 Cf. Letter from János Kodolányi to Lord-Lieutenant of Pécs Béla Fischer, 10 July 1944, quoted by Kodolányi 1988, pp. 129–132; Csűrös 2001, p. 141.
46 (He quotes a report written on 5 May 1945.) Kodolányi 1988, pp. 125–126.

The original copy of Kodolányi's memorandum has not been found so far, and therefore only summaries of its content are available;[47] from these, it is revealed that Kodolányi does not argue for the need to break with the Germans, as he considered this to be an indisputable starting point. As he writes, *"It is unnecessary to debate the necessity and urgency of this task."* In the given situation, the two key questions are whether the Hungarian elite can overcome its fears and reservations and cooperate with the Soviet Union, and whether it will be able to carry out this change of direction relying on Hungarian society. Kodolányi states that it is the responsibility of the country's leaders to act, as the solution is in the hands of the politicians and the soldiers. However, if they are determined to do so, society would follow them in this step. Nevertheless, it is not enough to calmly acknowledge this social support. The conclusion of an armistice, as a precondition for an exit from the war, is a diplomatic task, and its execution is up to the political elite. But the exit must be made in organic cooperation with society: *"a broad-based democratic government must be formed, relying predominantly on the masses of workers and peasantry."*[48] Switching sides in the war is the task of the Hungarian military elite and the Hungarian officers following Horthy's orders, but it is also necessary to involve and arm the workforce, so that switching sides is accompanied by an armed uprising: *"We have to arm the workers so that we can show strength to the Germans inside the country."*[49]

The 80-page draft became an important starting point for the political preparation for the exit. Faragho considered the release of some of those arrested after the occupation as one of the direct results of the draft. *"In accordance with the requirements of the memorandum, we began requesting the release of internees... Thus, at the suggestion of Kodolányi, after great difficulties and a dangerous search, I freed Miklós Somogyi and Péter Veres. I also managed to set free two leading personalities of the university youth, also recommended*

47 Csűrös 2001, pp. 141–142; Darvas 1945, pp. 119–122.
48 Csűrös 2001, p. 141.
49 Csűrös 2001, p. 141.

by Kodolányi."[50] The democratic parties forced into illegality as a result of the occupation were condensed in the Hungarian Front, which would have become a *"broad-based democratic government"* in the event of a successful exit from the war. *"The memoir of the Hungarian Front is completely in line with my memorandum. The points of the claims are also the same, word for word,"*[51] Kodolányi recalled later, evoking the significance of his work.

The official delegation, led by Gábor Faragho, with the participation of Domokos Szent-Iványi and Géza Teleki, travelled to Moscow to hold armistice negotiations on 28 September.[52] By 11 October, a preliminary armistice agreement had been reached, which was accepted by Horthy via a telegram, and solemnly signed by the members of the committee. However, the agreement never entered into force. On 15 October 1944, the Arrow Cross coup removed Horthy from power. The attempt to exit the war failed, and Hungary remained on the side of the Germans in the war. Most leaders and contacts of the Hungarian Independence Movement were forced to flee, while some joined the work of Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's National Liberation Commission and the armed resistance.

However, the end of the war did not bring them the relief and recognition for their courageous actions. In fact, the opposite happened. The victims of the first show trials of the communist dictatorship were actors in the Community and the Independence Movement. In 1947, they were convicted as "fascist conspirators" and charged of scheming to overthrow the republic. A little more than two years earlier, many of them were imprisoned for being "anti-fascist" by the Gestapo or the Arrow Cross. But in these lawsuits, a verdict was also handed down for resistance activity. An excerpt from the state security report assessing community lawsuits: *"The investigating authorities rejected the defence of the suspects, according to which they had participated in the resistance movement.* [...] *The basic premise is that an anti-German attempt linked to*

50 Csűrös 2001, p. 142.
51 Csűrös 2001, p. 142.
52 Szent-Iványi 2016, pp. 184–287.

Horthy's entourage cannot be called resistance."[53] Therefore, according to this argument, any form of resistance that could be related in any way to "Horthist elements" was to be interpreted as state-authorised activity, and consequently a manifestation of "Horthy's fascism". In a country where one of the focal points of organisation against Hitler's politics operated within the circles of the political elite, finding a connection between this elite and any group of resistance was only a matter of intent. This interpretation of resistance had been outlined from 1945, was stated in 1947, and remained valid for the entire period of the regime, based on the argument in the report that states, *"As a result of the exploration of socialist historical science, it can be shown that the dominant circles of the Horthy system used 'resistance' as a pretence to perform activities meant to preserve their power."*[54]

53 HASSS 2. 1. XIV/5-1. Report on Evaluation of the Case of the Hungarian Community by Police Major Dr Endre Benedek, Police Lieutenant Colonel Dr István Horváth and Police Colonel Ferenc Ács, 15 January 1970.

54 Ibid.

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ÉVA TEISZLER

LASTING WORKS OF THE ST. STEPHEN MEMORIAL YEAR

To commemorate the 900th anniversary of the death of the first Hungarian king, the founder of the state, King Saint Stephen I (1001–1038), the Hungarian Catholic Church announced a Jubilee Year and – as this was the year when Budapest hosted the 34th International Eucharistic Congress – it also declared 1938 a dual Holy Year. The Hungarian state commemorated this anniversary by organising the St. Stephen Memorial Year.

Although their ethos and spirit was mutually reinforcing,[1] these three series of events, need to be considered as separate, with their own boards of organisers[2] and the main events taking place on different dates.[3] Nevertheless, historical memory as well as the then-contemporary press[4] have treated them as one, especially the events of the Jubilee and the Memorial Year. This is hardly surprising, as both the Congress and the Jubilee enjoyed full-

1 Ligeti 2018.

2 Organisation of the Memorial Year was the responsibility of the National Board of the St. Stephen Memorial Year (chief patron: Miklós Horthy) and the National Executive Committee subordinated thereto, the Eucharistic Congress was organised by the Chief Preparatory Board of the Eucharistic World Congress (chief patron: Magdolna Purgly, wife of Miklós Horthy), whereas the events of the Jubilee Year were organised by Actio Catholica.

3 The Eucharistic Congress took place between 25 and 29 May 1938 in Budapest. The official events of the Jubilee Year started the following day, on 30 May 1938. The main events of the St. Stephen Memorial Year took place between 15 and 22 August.

4 See, for example, Szent István országa. A Pesti Hírlap Naptára, 1938. pp. 113–120.

ranging government support in political as well as financial terms,[5] and the messages they conveyed, especially to the Hungarians, were also identical. The continuity of jointly organised events and events organised on their margins also contributed to the three series of events becoming one single celebration.

The Jubilee Year and the Memorial Year linked to the Eucharistic Congress put Hungary at the centre of tremendous interest from abroad, thereby providing an opportunity for the country to break out from its isolation. The more pronounced presence of Hungary in the world press offered an opportunity to show the efforts the country had made at recovery, to shed light upon its role as a bastion,[6] and at the same time to present Budapest as a cosmopolitan city and popularise Hungarian culture worldwide.[7]

For the Hungarian nation traumatised by the Treaty of Trianon, the St. Stephen Year was first and foremost a source of strength for an inner revival. For those who lived outside and inside Hungary after the new frontiers were drawn up, it gave the experience and knowledge of belonging together spiritually, intellectually and historically and sent them a message of hope, since Hungary's Holy King, the founder of the state and his activities had been surrounded by cultic respect since the Middle Ages. Thus, the 900th anniversary of his death provided a moment for the nation torn apart to recall the ethos of the state created by St. Stephen and ideologically reinforce the peaceful revisionist efforts based on that.[8] The events organised by the state together with the Catholic Church and the standalone events of the Jubilee Year with the participation of local and national political government and supported by the state demonstrated the well-established relationship and coordinated activities of the government and the Church, and also projected the same to happen in the future. This was justified ex-post when the territories reannexed to Hungary between 1938

5 See Állami költségvetés az 1937/38. évre. Sommázat. 15, 74. Állami költségvetés az 1938/39. évre. Sommázat. 15, 72. Állami költségvetés az 1939. évi julius hó 1. napjától az 1940. évi december hó 31. napjáig terjedő 1939–1940. számadási időszakra. 15.

6 Várkonyi 1963.

7 Vass 2003.

8 A magyarországi evangélikus egyházegyetem 1938. évi november hó 12. napján, Budapesten tartott évi rendes közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve. 4–5. https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/EvangKozgyulJkv_1938_11_12/?query=eml%C3%A9k%C3%A9v&pg=3&layout=s (downloaded on 25 March 2020)

and 1941 were reintegrated into the structure of Church administration with the support of the Holy See.[9] In the meantime, the Memorial Year announced by the state brought the Hungarian nation together in many other respects. The memorial events and celebrations organised by the Catholic Church themselves would not have been able to sufficiently cover the entirety of the nation. In the prevailing situation, Protestant denominations and Israelites were not able to join a national and religious celebration dominated by the Catholic Church, and the only way for them to join and relate to the historical past, express and live these emotions was to celebrate the anniversary purely as a national day.[10] Therefore, the role of the state events in the nation's inner revival was as significant as the role played by the timing of the Eucharistic Congress (1938) in an international context.

In response to societal needs at the time, the Hungarian government identified the major issues of national policy as expected, and also wanted to satisfy the needs related to memory politics: therefore, it made efforts to record the events and the messages they conveyed in 1938 for the benefit of future generations. A book dedicated to the events of the Memorial Year was published,[11] a historical monograph dedicated to the memory of St. Stephen,[12] and several studies, articles and other publications were released.[13] Based on the official news coverage of MTI [Hungarian News Agency], daily papers with national circulation, media at the county level, local and church press regularly published reports, the radio regularly broadcast thematic programmes and news coverage, motion pictures were made of major celebrations,[14] and a cult and report film was produced of St. Stephen, commissioned by the state.[15]

9 See Gergely 1999.

10 Giczi 2010; Csíky 2016 – especially: pp. 70–78, cf. Tóth 2012–2013.

11 Moravek 1940.

12 Serédi 1938.

13 Their compilation would only be possible in a dedicated bibliography, therefore we mention but a few examples here. Hóman 1938, Kuthy 1938, Magyar Jogászegyleti Értekezések és egyéb tanulmányok, 6. (1938) no. 21–24. 1938. Rendkívüli szám; Magyar Jogászegyleti Értekezések és egyéb tanulmányok, 7. (1939) no. 25–28.; Dénes et al. 1938; Komoróczy 1938; Clauser 1938; Lukinich 1938.

14 Cf: Demeter 2000. https://filmhiradokonline.hu/watch.php?id=2930 (downloaded on 20 March 2020.); Moravek 1940, pp. 67–73.

15 Moravek 1940, pp. 56–58.

A call for music pieces invited by Bálint Hóman, Minister of Religion and Education, to commemorate the St. Stephen Memorial Year was published in the Budapest Official Gazette on 1 December 1937.[16] The call for music pieces covered three categories: 28 pieces were submitted, including 8 oratoria, 9 pieces for choir and orchestra, 10 pieces of four movements written for orchestra and one piece for choir.[17]

The year was also made memorable by commemorative stamps issued in two different series. The first stamps of 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 16, 20, 25, 30, 32, 40, 50 and 70 Hungarian fillérs were in circulation from 1 January 1938; they were designed[18] by Sándor Légrády,[19] painter, goldsmith, graphic artist and stamp designer.[20] A second series – put into circulation from 12 August[21] and sold at a surcharge of 100% – was designed by Antal Diósy,[22] Munkácsy-award winning painter and graphic artist.[23] Of the stamps sold throughout the year the 20- and 70-fillér stamps – the former depicting St. Stephen sitting on his throne and the latter depicting the Holy Crown – were later reprinted following numerous proofs with the graphic design unchanged, but in different colours, with the inscription "Homecoming 1938". These two stamps were put into circulation by the Royal Hungarian Post on 1 December, a date nearly coinciding with the date of military entry into Upper Hungary[24] and were in use until 30 June 1939.[25]

16 Zenei pályázat. 14.393/1937. no. III. Budapesti Közlöny 1 December 1937. 4.
17 Moravek 1940, pp. 53–55.
18 Kisfaludi 1997, p. 287.
19 http://lexikon.katolikus.hu/L/L%C3%A9gr%C3%A1dy.html (downloaded on 12 March 2020)
20 Decree 124.000/1937. IV. 3. of the Hungarian Royal Minister of Trade and Transport (1937). Budapesti Közlöny, 2 December, pp. 2–3.
21 Kisfaludi 1997, p. 289.
22 Fitz 1999, pp. 474–475.
23 Decree 108.747/1938. IV. 3. of the Hungarian Royal Minister of Trade and Transport (1938). Budapesti Közlöny, 18 August, pp. 1–2.
24 Kisfaludi 1997, p. 290.
25 Kostyál 2013.

To commemorate the Memorial Year, 600,000 coins[26] were put into circulation known by collectors as the "St. Stephen 5-Pengő", which in terms of weight, size and silver content (640 thousandths silver, weighing 25 grams) was equivalent to the 5-pengő coin used at that time. Lajos Berán,[27] sculptor, coin artist and chief engraver at the State Mint, prepared two designs and several proofs beforehand. Of these, the one minted in high numbers was the coin with an ornate edge, on the front: the coat of arms with the inscription Magyar Királyság (Kingdom of Hungary), the year on both sides, the value indicated under the coat of arms on the front, on the reverse side: inscription Szent István 969 + 1038 with the portrait of St. Stephen facing right and the name of the designer.[28] In the 1960s, using the original master dies and proofs, ARTEX Foreign Trade Company issued a series of the coins not put into circulation before, to be sold abroad. The coins known by collectors as the "Standing St. Stephen" 5-pengő and 100-pengő coins were made of silver and gold; the former has a rectangular version, as well (rectangular St. Stephen 5-Pengő). The front is identical to that of the coin in circulation – with the exception of the inscription 100 pengő on the gold version – on the reverse St. Stephen standing facing left, with the circular legend "Készült Szent István halálának 900. évfordulójára" [Commemorating the 900th anniversary of the death of St. Stephen]. In terms of size and weight, the Standing St. Stephen silver coin issued in about 4,000 pieces is identical to the silver pengő put into circulation, whereas the rectangular version issued in fewer than 1,100 copies weighs more than 50 grams. As few as 89 of the golden 100-pengő coins were made, weighing 28.96 grams.

In addition to coins in circulation, various commemorative coins and bronze plaques were made. Several associations and towns issued their own coins to commemorate the event. Of the commemorative coins issued by cities,

26 Explanatory Memorandum of Act IX of 1938 on issuing 5-pengő silver coins in memory of King St. Stephen (https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=93800009.TVI&targetdate=&printTitle=1938.+%C3%A9vi+IX.+t%C3%B6rv%C3%A9nycikk+indokol%C3%A1sa&referer=1000ev downloaded on 6 March 2020)

27 Éber 1935, pp. 99–100.

28 Decree 72.042 of 1938 of the Hungarian Royal Finance Minister (1938). Magyarországi rendeletek tára 72, Booklet 1–3, 1728 (274).

the best known are those issued by the two main cities where celebrations were organised: one of them is Székesfehérvár (coin designed by Walter Madarassy), the other is Esztergom (coin designed by Béla Hellebrand) and as for the commemorative plaques, the best known are those issued by the capital of Budapest (designed by József Ispánky and Walter Madarassy).[29] These coins and plaques were primarily intended to be presented to guests of honour attending the events at those locations.

Regarding calls for works of art, the call for paintings with a total budget of 6,000 pengő was the most popular with the highest number of works submitted.[30] These were exhibited in the Műcsarnok [Museum of Contemporary Art] in May-June 1938 at the St. Stephen exhibition. 58 paintings submitted by 38 painters were on display, in addition to works of art submitted outside this call, and those submitted for the call issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference to commemorate the Jubilee Year. The Best Mural Design Award was won by Vilmos Aba Novák with his design of the St. Stephen composition made for the mausoleum in Székesfehérvár, whereas the Best Painting Award went to István Szőnyi for a scene from his work titled "Stephen's Apotheosis".[31]

The state intended to present the most outstanding works of art and other paintings commissioned or made in the framework of the restricted tender to cities in the countryside, which in some particular way cherished the memory of St. Stephen. A precondition for that was the city's ability to create a work of art of similar value.[32] This is how a relief was awarded –among others – to Baja, Debrecen, Esztergom, Kalocsa and Sopron. Paintings were intended to be given to, for example, Hódmezővásárhely, Kassa (today: Košice, Slovakia), Kecskemét, Komárom, Miskolc, Szombathely and Vác. However, some of these were destroyed during the war (e.g. the painting by Gábor Döbrentei at the Town Hall in Szombathely) or were never completed (Kassa), or they did not arrive at the venue they were intended for (e.g. the oil painting entitled Princes

29 As for the artists and their plaques, see Kaposi 2008, pp. 24, 37, 67.
30 Budapesti Hírlap (1937) 57 (244) p. 11.
31 Komáromi Kacz et. al. (1938); Moravek 1940, pp. 30–32.
32 Moravek 1940, pp. 29–30.

László and Géza on a Hunting Trip and the Foundation of the Cathedral, dimensions: 300x500 cm, to be displayed in the Assembly Hall in Vác).[33]

As for works given to different towns, the tapestries deserve specific attention due to their peculiar character. Many of the embroideries meant to be displayed in the mayors' offices in Győr (Jenő Remsey), Nyíregyháza (Noémi Ferenczy), Pécs (Endre Domanovszky), Szeged (István Pekáry), Székesfehérvár (István Pekáry) and Szombathely (Barna Basilides) are still kept with great respect and put on display from time to time.[34]

Due to local and state commissions, the number of public monuments also increased. Sculptures depicting St. Stephen and his activities were unveiled in several cities (e.g. Székesfehérvár, Szombathely, Kalocsa, Veszprém), decorative fountains were erected (e.g. in Kaposvár, Máriaremete, Szombathely). Seccoes and frescoes were also produced in large numbers to celebrate the anniversary, these were made by the most renowned artists (Vilmos Aba Novák – Székesfehérvár, Pannonhalma, Budapest – Városmajor), as well as by less known artists (e.g. Ernő Jeges: St. Stephen builds Székesfehérvár; Bakonysárkány, Roman Catholic church).[35]

These works displayed in public spaces fit into urban development programmes launched in the 1930s which reached their peak in the Memorial Year. One priority venue of the Memorial Year was a particular frontrunner in this area, namely Székesfehérvár, developing into a modern city in this period,[36] and Veszprém, which was busy renovating the Castle and its surroundings and in the process of constructing the St. Stephen viaduct.[37] No major investment or reconstruction was necessary to name or rename streets in different places, and yet this act left a lasting impact on the memory of local communities (for example Győr, Kalocsa) or city quarters (e.g. Eger).

33 Schleininger 2007, p. 42.
34 Zombori 2001.
35 Szücs 1987. passim; Sasvári 1996, pp. 50–56; Salgótarján történelmi kronológiája I. A kezdetektől 1944-ig. (Data, sources and studies from the Nógrád County Archives 20.) Salgótarján, 1996. passim.
36 Demeter 2000, pp. 9–44; 2017; Demeter & Gelencsér 2002.
37 Csiszár 2010.

Unfortunately, the collection and historically focused processing of valuable works with lasting impacts generally described above have not taken place yet. Though research of local history has revealed some interesting findings over the past few decades,[38] their comprehensive presentation is yet to come.

38 Some examples: Varga 2002; Petrov 2006, Melléklet. 1; Tóth G. 2008, pp. 345–379; "Késő maradékainknak tétessen jegyzésben!" Írásos emlékek Vác város múltjából, pp. 1074–1990. Váci Történelmi Tár 1. Vác, 1996 p. 623; Csécs 2000.

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LÁSZLÓ TAMÁS VIZI

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS THE FAR-RIGHT IN HUNGARY'S 1939 NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Radical right-wing movements and their organisations in the first half of the 1930s

From the early 1930s, the increasingly tangible activity of radical right-wing organisations and movements gradually emerging in Hungarian political life and in various social classes was mainly explained by the following factors:

1. The impact of Italian fascism on Hungarian politics and society. From 1927 onwards, strengthening ties between Italy and Hungary provided the background for this.[1] The agreements with Italy gave hope to the Hungarian political elite and public that Hungary, which was excluded from foreign policy after the Treaty of Trianon, could break out of the surrounding Little Entente with the help of Italy and become a foreign policy partner of Italy, which was one of the winners in the World War I and was playing

1 Prime Minister István Bethlen held talks with Mussolini in Rome in April 1927, in Milan in April 1928 and again in Rome in April 1930. At their first negotiations, on 5 April 1927, the parties signed a treaty of permanent peace and eternal friendship between Hungary and Italy, thus bringing Hungary's foreign policy isolation to an end. The negotiations and their results are described in Gulyás 2013, pp. 53–59, 70–73.

an increasingly important role at the international level. As a result of improving and strengthening Italian-Hungarian relations, political figures and the public learned about the economic successes of Italian fascism, its social impacts, and the totalitarian political system developed by Mussolini, who introduced a one-party model that did away with parliamentary democracy. This political system was then considered as a model by certain Hungarian political circles and its adaptation to Hungary was set as a goal. Thus, the formation of an Italian-style fascist party soon became one of the main objectives of Hungarian far-right politicians. In the late 1920s, however, these attempts to establish a party in Hungary along Italian-type fascist lines remained unsuccessful.[2]

2. The impacts of the economic crisis spreading to Hungary. As a result of the spill-over of the economic crisis to Hungary, radical right-wing movements enjoyed growing public support, because due to the crisis the widespread poverty, and social and economic marginalisation was conducive to political forces offering radical solutions. Thus, the economic recession – which plunged the middle class, poor peasants, masses of workers and, last but not least, the lumpen elements of society into a financial and existential crisis – provided fertile conditions for right-wing movements. It is therefore no coincidence that during the years of the economic crisis, a great number of far-right parties and movements claiming to be national socialists sprung up, and a real "party-forming" process started to take place. In 1931, at the peak of the crisis, the National Socialist Hungarian Workers' Party was formed under the leadership of Zoltán Böszörmény and Zoltán Meskó, which then became the Scythe Cross Movement from 1933. In the summer of 1932, the Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party and the Hungarian National Socialist Agricultural Labourers' and Workers' Party, which adopted the swastika as their emblem until they were banned, were founded by Zoltán Meskó and Count Fidél Pálffy, and then at the end of 1933, the Hungarian National Socialist Party was established by

2 Paksa 2007, pp. 69–70.

Count Sándor Festetics. The list of such parties could be expanded, as the self-appointed party leaders regularly disagreed with each other, prompting them leave the party and establish a new one under a different name.[3]

3. Developments in Germany and German national socialist propaganda from the early 1930s.
4. These served as models for the Hungarian followers of national socialism. Most Hungarian "sister parties" followed the same social demagoguery as the German Nazis, trying to adapt it to the Hungarian conditions. They also adopted the Nazi symbols, wore similar uniforms to the SA, and tried to form parties along the same lines.

The 1935 national elections and the results of the national socialists

The first serious test of the Hungarian national socialist movements took place at the end of March and beginning of April 1935,[4] with the national elections held for the fifth time in Hungary within the post-Trianon borders.[5] However, the national socialists, who emerged as a right-wing opposition to the ruling party, did not achieve their objective of rallying enough support to reach their expected number of seats in the National Assembly, even though the social unrest caused by the economic crisis and the favourable opportunities offered by the international political situation seemed to be suitable for achieving this purpose. The main reasons for losing the elections were the personal conflicts between the self-appointed politicians with high ambitions, the

3 For a detailed discussion on the national socialist movements unfolding in Hungary during the global economic crisis, see Paksy 2009, pp. 202–237; Paksa 2007, pp. 70–71; Stankovits 1997, pp. 101–103.

4 For further discussion on the political antecedents of the 1935 elections, electoral issues, the campaign and the results of the elections, see Sipos 1999, pp. 146–175.

5 During the interwar period, National Assembly elections were held in post-Trianon Hungary in 1920, 1922, 1926, 1931, 1935 and 1939.

resulting fragmented party structure, the lack of a clear and meaningful social programme and, last but not least, inefficient propaganda which failed to mobilise voters. As for the national socialist parties, the Hungarian National Socialist Party, led by Count Sándor Festetics was ultimately elected to the National Assembly, winning two seats:[6] Sándor Festetics from the Enying district of Veszprém county and[7] István Balogh, Jr. from the party list in the Debrecen constituency.[8]

Although the results of the national socialists in the 1935 election, i.e. the two seats which were won, seem modest, looking at the support of the national socialist parties (Hungarian National Socialist Party, Party of National Will), it should be noted that the number of votes cast in open ballot single-member constituencies was only a couple dozen less than 65,000 votes, representing 4.45% of the electorate. The number of secret ballot votes cast for the Hungarian National Socialist Party was approximately 18,000, accounting for 3.45% of votes cast in secret ballot. In total, nearly 83,000 people voted for the national socialist parties, accounting for 4.2% of the votes per party.[9] Behind this contradiction between the number of seats won and the support of the national socialist parties was an electoral system based on a form of majority rule, which did not lend itself to fragmentary votes. As fractional ballots were not transferred to any other candidates, they were completely lost. However, the rising support for and the sudden advance of the national socialists served as red flags for other political parties.

6 Hubai 2001a, p. 59.

7 For biographical details on Sándor Festetics as a representative, see Parliamentary Almanac. On the 1935–1940 National Assembly (Sturm's Parliamentary Almanac), Haeffler, I. (ed.). Magyar Távirati Iroda Rt., Budapest, 1940 (hereinafter Parliamentary Almanac 1935–1940) pp. 257–258.

8 Idem, p. 205: Note that in 1936, István Balogh left the party led by Festetics and joined together with Fidél Pálffy.

9 Hubai 2001a, p. 58.

Rise of far-right parties in the second half of the 1930s

1935 was a turning point in the history of the Hungarian national socialist movements not only because they managed to be elected to the National Assembly for the first time, but also because an actor appeared on the far-right, who significantly influenced and then dominated the radical right-wing of the political spectrum for the next ten years. This was Ferenc Szálasi, who had been increasingly explicit in expressing his political views from the spring of 1933.[10] After the Major General retired from his position and a promising military career, on 1 March 1935, he founded the Party of National Will[11] on 4 March. That same month he published a 15-page party programme book entitled "Goal and Demands" accompanied by a National Will propaganda leaflet.

Szálasi did not stand in the 1935 parliamentary elections, although Gömbös offered him a seat as a candidate on the ruling party list. By contrast, he supported Lajos Csoór who contested the elections in the constituency of Tura and was the founder of the Party of People's Will, an organisation similar in name to the party established by Szálasi.[12] Szálasi then contested the by-elections of 2 April 1936, but failed miserably, winning less than a thousand votes in the Pomáz electoral district.[13] Not only did Szálasi fail to achieve good results, attempts at unifying the far-right national socialist parties in the spring of 1937 also failed. In addition, the Party of National Will, which was described as an "extremely inciting" movement, was dissolved on 16 April 1937

10 Szálasi's first work was published in March 1933 entitled "Plan for the building of the Hungarian state 1."

11 For a detailed discussion on the party programme of the Party of National Will, see Paksa 2013, pp. 31–35; Karsai 2016, pp. 54–57.

12 Lajos Csoór was finally elected to the National Assembly representing the Party of People's Will, but despite their agreement, he did not follow Szálasi's programme, who supported him. Parliamentary Almanac 1935–1940, p. 241.

13 Paksa 2013, p. 42; Karsai 2016, pp. 60–61.

by Minister of Interior József Széll. The previous day, Szálasi had been arrested and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.[14]

At the assembly held in the Vigadó performance hall in Buda on 24 October 1937, however, some of the far-right parties that had so far been unable to cooperate seemed to have settled their personal conflicts and established the Hungarian National Socialist Party, subtitled the Hungarist Movement, under the leadership of István Balogh, Jr., Ferenc Szálasi and Lajos Széchenyi.[15] The new party headquarters was located at 60 Andrássy út, courtesy of Lajos Széchenyi. However, the party, formed with great enthusiasm, was dissolved after four months, on 21 February 1938 by the Minister of Interior in the Darányi government, just like the Party of National Will, claiming that the Hungarian National Socialist Party was the successor of the Party of National Will.[16] For the second time, Minister of Interior József Széll had disrupted the plans of Szálasi and his allies.

March 1938 then marked another turning point in the history of the Hungarian National Socialist-Hungarist Movement. Following Germany's annexation of Austria [the "*Anschluss*"] in mid-March 1938, the Kingdom of Hungary became a close neighbour of the German Third Reich, with all its consequences. Events taking place in Austria received attention in Hungary as well. The far-right movements celebrated, became louder and more demanding, and thought that their time was coming. Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi tried to stop the swift rise of the far-right and force the movement into a constitutional framework by offering Szálasi a kind of compromise pact, while placing dozens of leaders of the dissolved party under police surveillance. However, in the second half of March 1938 Darányi conducted negotiations not with Szálasi, but with one of his close colleagues, Kálmán Hubay, who joined the movement in 1937. As a result of the agreement, the ruling party did not nominate a candidate against Kálmán Hubay in the by-elections in Lovasberény on 27 March 1938, who thus won a seat in the National Assembly. With this

14 Paksa 2013, p. 45.
15 Paksa 2013, pp. 45–46; Karsai 2016, pp. 79–82; Paksa 2007, p. 72.
16 Paksa 2013, pp. 47–48; Karsai 2016, pp. 60–61.

move, Darányi hoped that he could force the far-right movements, which frequently used the means of aggressive street politics, to abide by the rules of Parliament, and that he would be able to divide the already disruptive far-right forces by offering them the opportunity to win seats in the National Assembly. However, Darányi was disappointed by this, and his political gestures towards the far-right proved to be a serious mistake.[17]

Hubay, who won a seat in the National Assembly, quickly became active. On 4 April 1938, under his "presidency and leadership",[18] he formed an organisation called the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement.[19] Szálasi was only able to join the party after 29 May, after police surveillance against him was lifted.[20] With the founding of the party led by Hubay, a new phase began in the history of the far-right movements, coinciding with a change in political style. Street politics, which was not free of populist, violent action, was replaced by more palatable parliamentary politics, which also marked the beginning of preparations for the next National Assembly elections.

However, the National Socialist – Hungarist Movement did not contest the next national elections with the name and structure announced in April 1938. Although the name of the party was changed to the Hungarian National Socialist Party – Hungarist Movement on 12 November 1938, this did not dispel the climate of mistrust in government policy. The government took numerous administrative steps to reduce the influence of the far-right as much as the foreign policy situation would allow. One example of this was "Regulation No. 3400/1938 M.E. on the disciplinary liability of civil servants and other employees

17 Kerepeszki 2014, pp. 113–114.

18 Karsai 2016, p. 121.

19 Historians who publish on the subject of the founding of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement usually say that the formation of the party was announced by Hubay at the 4 April 1938 session of the House of Representatives. See Kerepeszki 2014, p. 114; Paksa 2013, p. 48. However, according to an entry in the Journal of the House of Representatives of 5 April 1938, Kálmán Hubay, along with several of his fellow MPs, was absent without authorisation from the 4 April 1938 session. Consequently, he was unable to announce the formation of the National Socialist Hungarian Party – Hungarist Movement. Journal of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly convened for 27 April 1935. Volume 17. Budapest, 1939. p. 531.

20 Paksa 2013, p. 48.

who violated the provisions on association membership",[21] which was clearly directed against the far-right movements. According to the Regulation:

> "A civil servant or other public servant may not be a member of a party which: 1) prescribes for party members distinctive clothing or peculiar form of dress which is capable of giving the appearance of a uniform or clearly expressing membership of a party; 2) seeks, through overt or covert propaganda, to spread fake news and deliberate rumours, to damage prestige, disturb the social peace and discipline necessary for constructive work, or if this propaganda leads to these situations; 3) engages in propaganda, verbally or in writing, so as to cause great excitement or general unrest among the masses."[22]

As a further administrative step of the government, on 21 February 1939, Minister of Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer banned the Hungarian National Socialist Party – Hungarist Movement by regulation, as one of the first measures of the Teleki government, which took office on 16 February 1939. This happened in response to the Arrow Cross assassination attempt at the Dohány Street Synagogue on 3 February 1939, which also resulted in fatalities.[23] Police initiated the arrest of protesters who responded to the government's actions with demonstrations.

However, the immunity protecting Hubay provided an opportunity for the Movement's parliamentary leader to found another party – called the Arrow Cross Party – on 8 March 1939, a few days after the previous party was banned. Hubay announced the formation of the party prior to the agenda at the meeting of the House of Representatives on 8 March 1939:

> "Honourable Members of the House! Traditionally, when a new party is emerging in political life and this party has parliamentary representation, the members of the party introduce themselves in front of the House Members through their Member of Parliament. I am following this old parliamentary tradition as I inform the

21 Külügyi Közlöny (10 June 1938): Vol 18, No 4. pp. 16–17.
22 Idem, p. 17.
23 Karsai 2016, p. 434.

> Honourable House of a new political party called the 'Arrow Cross Party', founded under my leadership by István Dobó, retired Hungarian Royal Lieutenant General, Dezső Mokcsay, retired Hungarian Royal Colonel, Artúr Bogyay, retired Hungarian Royal Hussar Colonel, imperial and royal chamberlain and János Halmay, retired Captain, and which is represented in the House of Representatives by myself and my fellow Members of Parliament, Artúr Haám and Dr Kálmán Rátz."[24]

The first national test of the Arrow Cross Party soon took place, in the so-called Pentecost elections held on 28–29 May 1939.

Political antecedents of the 1939 Pentecost elections

In the history of Hungarian interwar parliamentarism, something unexpected occurred in the second half of November 1938, which was hitherto unprecedented in the nearly twenty years of the system's existence. On 22 November, 54 representatives from the ruling Party of National Unity (NEP), led by Sándor Sztranyavszky[25] announced their intent to leave the party, followed by another four Members the next day. The number of so-called dissidents, including those who had left in mid-November, thus rose to 62. Consequently, the ruling party lost its comfortable parliamentary majority. The NEP had only 99 members left, barely exceeding 40% of the mandates in the House of Representatives, which led to the ruling party in minority being voted down by the opposition 115 to 94 in the debate on 23 November 1938.[26]

24 Journal of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly convened for 27 April 1935. Volume 22. Budapest, 1939. p. 192.

25 Hungarian Parliamentary Almanac. Five hundred Hungarian lives 1931–1936. Lengyel, L. – Vidor, Gy. (eds.). Globus Nyomdai Műintézet Rt., Budapest, 1931. pp. 289–291; Parliamentary Almanac 1935–1940, pp. 373–375.

26 Hubai 2001a, p. 61; Sipos, Stier & Vida 1967, pp. 602–620.

This marked the beginning of a government crisis lasting several months that severely divided Hungarian domestic politics and also involved open, aggressive action by the far-right. One possible way out of the crisis was the resignation of Prime Minister Béla Imrédy, the appointment of a new Prime Minister capable of uniting the Christian-national, conservative political forces, reorganisation of the ruling party, early dissolution of the National Assembly and the announcement of new elections.

First news of the possible dissolution of the National Assembly leaked out in mid-January 1939. Although pro-government circles tried to refute this, opposition representatives considered dissolving the National Assembly and calling new elections as the only way to resolve the political crisis.[27]

In late January and early February 1939, Regent Miklós Horthy – who had supported Imrédy at the end of November 1938 and had not accepted the Prime Minister's resignation – realised that Imrédy had to resign. The Regent was more and more concerned about Imrédy's increasingly dictatorial actions and complained in particular about the Prime Minister not having sought the consent of the head of state on important bills such as the forthcoming land law and the Second Jewish Law. This provided the background for Imrédy's dismissal on 15 February 1939 and the appointment of Count Pál Teleki as Prime Minister the following day.

Teleki presented his government's programme in the National Assembly on 22 February 1939.[28] In the introduction to the "Government Statement", the Prime Minister emphasised: "I have to explain to the Honourable Members of the House, why I took this place, this task, why with the same programme as my predecessor or predecessors, why with the party that is behind me, or more precisely, around me."[29] There is no doubt that the new

27 [Without signature and initials], Székesfehérvári Friss Ujság (hereinafter SZFU) (14 January 1939): News spread about the dissolution of the House and impending elections, XLI (11). p. 1.

28 For Pál Teleki's introductory speech to the Parliament on 22 February 1939 [Government statement], see Journal of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly convened for 27 April 1935. Volume 21. Budapest, 1939. pp. 494–506.

29 Idem, p. 494.

Prime Minister, proclaiming continuity in his programme, highlighted the pursuit of the previous government goals as a key objective. The party, to which Teleki referred in his speech, and which secured the parliamentary majority needed to implement the programme, was the new government party, the Party of Hungarian Life, which also supported the political goals of the Hungarian Life Movement at the meeting of the Party of National Unity on 7 March 1939. The papers published at the beginning of March 1939 also reported on the formation of the party: "[...] the Party of National Unity and the Hungarian Life Movement have united their forces and organisations and will henceforth continue their activities as a political party under the name of the Party of Hungarian Life [...]". At the meeting of the party, which was opened by Deputy Party Leader Bálint Hóman, Prime Minister Teleki also addressed the issue of elections before the deputies. He did not, however, mention early elections. Instead, he spoke only of the elections due in a year's time and focused on political preparations for such.[30]

However, Teleki clearly perceived that Imrédy still had significant support and influence in the Party of Hungarian Life as well as in many areas of economic and public life, which could seriously jeopardise firm governance. Additionally, the spectacular rise of the national socialist parties and movements gave the Prime Minister cause for serious concern. For Teleki therefore, it became increasingly clear that the positions of the ruling party could only be strengthened and stabilised by holding early elections. Another explicit and implicit motive for the early elections was to suppress the far-right movements, overthrow their leaders, and thus prevent far-right leaders from winning seats in the National Assembly.[31]

30 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (9 March 1939): There will be elections within a year. Important statements by the Prime Minister on the next national elections. XLI (56). p. 2.

31 Paksa 2007, pp. 71–73.

The 1938 Electoral Law as a legal instrument to suppress the far-right

Based on information leaked from government circles, in early April 1939 the press reported the news of the upcoming elections as a *fait accompli*.[32] Very soon, Regent Horthy made it clear that he himself was in favour of early elections and agreed with the political initiative of his Prime Minister. Therefore, on 4 May 1939, he dissolved the House of Representatives with a regent's rescript and convened the new parliament on 10 June. The head of state's decision was fully in line with the will of a country that had already been wildly excited about the elections weeks earlier. The day after the rescript, on 5 May 1939, a Decree of the Minister of the Interior setting the date of the elections was published, which called elections on 28–29 May 1939, the Pentecost holiday.

The excitement was even greater, considering that Act XIX of 1938[33] on National Elections, promulgated on 3 June 1938, had made significant amendments to the provisions of the previous Act XXVI of 1925.[34] The most important change was the abolition of the open ballot and, at the same time, the establishment of universal voting by secret ballot. However, upon the introduction of voting by secret ballot, education and age restrictions were imposed on the right to vote in National Assembly elections. The number of single-member constituencies was also reduced and it was defined as a general

32 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (5 April 1939): This morning, the Council of Ministers decided on the constituency boundaries. Elections are called for mid-May. XLI (77). p. 1.

33 Act XIX of 1938 on the Election of Members of Parliament https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93800019.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D41 (downloaded on March 2020); With this, the legislator brought the right to vote in the parliamentary elections to the same level as the right to vote in the municipal elections which was regulated by Act XXX of 1929 on the Settlement of Public Administration. Zachar 2005, I. pp. 66–79.

34 Act XXVI of 1925 on the Election of Members of Parliament https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92500026.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D39 (downloaded on March 2020).

principle that each county and municipal town forms a separate district with territorial party lists. As a result, 135 individual electoral districts and 125 districts with territorial party lists were established. With the introduction of the electoral deposit system, the recommendation and nomination mechanisms for candidates were also re-regulated. Candidates or parties had to deposit 2,000 pengős in single-member constituencies and 3,000 pengős in the case of party lists. Thus, financial risk also emerged in addition to political risk, especially in the light of the fact that the party forfeited the deposit and the amount was transferred to the state treasury if the individual candidate did not win one-quarter of the votes. By contrast, the number of signed recommendation slips needed to stand as a candidate in a single-member constituency decreased significantly. Candidates needed to obtain 500 signatures on official recommendation forms in order to appear on the ballot in single-member constituencies and needed 1,500 signatures to appear on party lists. However, the law strongly favoured parties that were able to win at least four seats in the previous 1935 elections. These so-called national parties needed only 150 signed recommendation slips to stand in single-member constituencies and 500 in order to appear on the party lists. This system of recommendation slips clearly benefitted the governing parties, and, at the same time, attempted to undermine the emerging, mainly far-right, national socialist-hungarist parties. The rules for distributing seats were also changed, enabling candidates to win elections held in single-member constituencies if they received only a relative majority of 40% of the votes cast. As for the party lists, using the largest remainder method, the list with the highest score won a seat.[35]

35 Hubai 2001a, p. 61; Pintér 1999, pp. 179–185; Laczkóné Dr Tuka 2003, pp. 82–83; Guóth 2009, pp. 219–229.

Success of the ruling party – Failure of the far-right in the 1939 Pentecost elections. A case study: Székesfehérvár and Fejér County

In the following section, the example of Székesfehérvár and Fejér County will be presented as a case study, which illustrates how the governing party was able to win all of the parliamentary seats in the city and the county and how it was able to prevent the Arrow Cross Party from gaining political ground. Of course, other factors were essential to this success, such as Bálint Hóman's charismatic personality and his work for the development of Székesfehérvár, as well as the checks hidden in the electoral law which proved to be suitable for stymieing the Arrow Cross.

Pursuant to Section 4 of Act XIX of 1938 on the Election of Members of Parliament, Fejér County and the municipal town of Székesfehérvár received a total of 8 parliamentary seats. On 3 May 1939, a Decree of the Minister of Interior was issued, which contained the new constituency boundaries.[36] Accordingly, the press not only described the new constituency boundaries in detail, but also gave a detailed report on possible pro-government and opposition candidates.[37] In Fejér County, the constituencies of Adony, Mór, Sárbogárd and Vál remained, but that of Hercegfalva was completely abolished by the decree, and a new district, the Székesfehérvár district, was established with the administrative centre of Székesfehérvár instead of the district of Lovasberény. This thorough redrawing of previous county constituency boundaries undoubtedly favoured the ruling party. With regard to the municipal town of Székesfehérvár, the electoral law also required that it form a single-member constituency. The law also prescribed that the county and the town could jointly decide on two more

36 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (4 May 1939): New constituency boundaries have been published. XLI (100). p. 1.

37 Idem, pp. 1–2.

seats on the party list. Székesfehérvár and Fejér County were thus allowed to elect a total of eight deputies to the next National Assembly.[38] There was no doubt that Bálint Hóman, a Member of Parliament for the town, would stand for election on behalf of the ruling party in the single-member constituency of Székesfehérvár.[39]

Meanwhile, it also became clear that constituents of Székesfehérvár and Fejér County would vote on the first day, 28 May,[40] and that András Tasnádi Nagy, the Minister of Justice, and a former State Secretary of Hóman would be at the top of the list of the Party of Hungarian Life in Fejér County.[41] András Tasnádi Nagy was deliberately chosen as the leader of the party list, and it definitely seemed to be a wise political move, as Hóman was able to campaign for his former deputy well known to the constituents of Székesfehérvár and at the same time, specifically support the territorial party list led by Tasnádi Nagy. Thus, in the expected election battle, the name of András Tasnádi Nagy was more than promising for the ruling party both in the city and in the county.

However, the public in Székesfehérvár was the most concerned about whether Bálint Hóman would be challenged. In this respect, the Social Democratic position became known earlier, on 4 May. According to this, considering mainly party-political propaganda aspects, the Social Democratic Party planned to run an individual candidate in Bálint Hóman's constituency. However, this posed a serious financial risk to the party, as they might easily

38 Idem, p. 1; Farkas 2009, p. 120.

39 Bálint Hóman had represented the city of Székesfehérvár in the National Assembly since the by-elections of 20 November 1932; Ujváry 2010, pp. 70–74; SZFU (30 April 1939): Who are the candidates representing Fejér County, XLI (97). p. 1.

40 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (6 May 1939): Székesfehérvár and Fejér County will vote on the first day of Pentecost. XLI (102). p. 1.

41 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (5 May 1939): Latest news on the elections. XLI (101). p. 1; András Tasnádi Nagy served as Political State Secretary at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education under Bálint Hóman from March 1935 to March 1938. As Hóman's Deputy, he dealt mainly with the affairs of Protestant churches and with artistic issues. He resigned when he was elected national president of the Party of National Unity in March 1938. He headed the Ministry of Justice from November 1938 to November 1939. He was removed when he was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives on 9 November 1939. Parliamentary Almanac 1935–1940, pp. 378–379.

lose the 2,000-pengő deposit required by the electoral law if their candidate lost against Hóman.[42]

On 6 May 1939, however, another piece of news was announced. This time the daily paper reported on a possible opposition candidate of the Arrow Cross. The press believed that Béla Kerekes, a company manager in Budapest originally from Székesfehérvár, who was also Kálmán Hubay's secretary, would run as an Arrow Cross candidate as Bálint Hóman's local opponent.[43]

In the meantime, the list of members of the Electoral Commissions and the number of eligible voters in each constituency were also made public. According to this, there were 8,995 eligible voters in the single-member constituency of Bálint Hóman in Székesfehérvár and 90,527 on the joint register of the city and the county. In the single-member constituency of Székesfehérvár, Dr Emil Fábián and Dr Mózes Gáspár held the positions of electoral commissioners, while Dr Béla Hlavathy and Dr László Gáspár filled the same position for the territorial list.[44]

At the same time as this news, the Székesfehérvár organisation of the Independent Smallholders Party also made an important announcement. They stated that they did not want to run a candidate against Hóman, but would stand in the election and contest the territorial list of the Party of Hungarian Life.[45]

As the mayor of Székesfehérvár, referring to Decree of the Minister of Interior No. 266.300/1939, published the official notice on the acquisition and signing of recommendation slips[46] for the national elections on 9 May 1939, the party led by Hóman started to collect the recommendation slips immediately after the recommendation form was authenticated. Pursuant to the law, the

42 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (4 May 1939): New constituency boundaries have been published. XLI (100). p. 2; Ultimately, the Social Democratic Party did not nominate a candidate against Hóman.

43 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (6 May 1939): Székesfehérvár and Fejér County will vote on the first day of Pentecost. XLI (102). p. 2.

44 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (9 May 1939): The Independent Smallholders Party stands in the election against the Party of Hungarian Life in Fejér County. XLI (104). p. 1.

45 Ibid.

46 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (9 May 1939): Official notice. XLI (104). p. 3.

candidates of the national parties – including Bálint Hóman of course – needed to obtain 150 signatures to appear on the ballot paper, and that could only be increased by a maximum of 50 percent for the purpose of replacement. No more recommendations could be accepted by the electoral commissioners. Under that provision, therefore, Hóman's party had to collect a total of 225 signatures. This did not seem like many in a constituency with an electorate of nearly 9,000, but there was another condition for validity. The signatures on the recommendation forms could be considered valid only if they were signed by the eligible voters before the district court or the officials or notaries appointed in the town hall.[47] Thus, the eligible voters had to appear in person at the designated place, which was in any case a challenging organisational and coordination task. However, this was not a problem for Hóman's party.

Hóman and the governing party in the city supporting him left nothing to chance. The Minister did everything he could to meet his constituents, listen to their concerns and problems, and at the same time outline national and local political goals. The fact that no opposition party was able to run a candidate against Hóman in the single-member constituency in Székesfehérvár until mid-May demonstrated the success of the campaign and his popularity and outstanding support.[48] Thus, it became almost certain that Hóman would be the only candidate to win the seat in Székesfehérvár unanimously, i.e. without holding an election. However, this had to wait until 20 May, the final deadline for submitting candidate recommendation forms.

Pursuant to the electoral law, in locations where the vote would take place on Pentecost Sunday, the required number of recommendation slips had to be submitted to the electoral commissioners by 1 p.m. on 20 May. On the final date, Hóman's party was the first to submit the recommendation forms, and since no other candidate appeared from Székesfehérvár, Hóman won the mandate unanimously without elections, pursuant to the law. Thus, despite

47 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (9 May 1939): Collection of signed recommendation slips for the Hóman party. XLI (104). p. 3.

48 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (16 May 1939): Final list of candidates for the county seats. XLI (110). p. 3.

the initial enthusiasm, the Social Democrats and Arrow Cross Party did not succeed in running an opposition candidate against Hóman. Ultimately, Béla Kerekes,[49] the secretary of the Arrow Cross party leader Kálmán Hubay, who had originally planned to run as an Arrow Cross candidate, did not stand in the election against Hóman, but did stand in the multi-member constituency of the municipal town of Pécs and as a candidate at the top of the list of the Arrow Cross in Heves County.[50] As it later turned out, without success.[51]

Incidentally, the governing party collected and submitted the recommendation forms in all single-member constituencies of Fejér County by the deadline. Just like Hóman, László Magasházy from the ruling party became a representative in the constituency of Vál without an opposition candidate.[52] The Party of Hungarian Life was also the first to submit the recommendation slips needed to announce a party list in the county. Along with the ruling party, only the Arrow Cross Party was able to do so. After that, it was entirely up to the electoral commissioners to accept the recommendation forms. They had to declare this by 22 May and inform the candidates and the parties concerned.[53]

On the one hand, the ruling party was pleased and excited that Hóman won the seat unanimously, without an opposition candidate in the single-member constituency of Székesfehérvár, but on the other hand, it posed a potential threat to the party list. Hóman's success could have sent the message to more uninformed voters in Székesfehérvár that they no longer needed to go out and vote on Pentecost Sunday. For them, the vote was no longer at stake. But this belief was incorrect. In accordance with the county's list voting law, Székesfehérvár formed one constituency together with Fejér County. The pro-

49 I would like to thank Dr Ágnes Tuka Laczkóné, József Vonyó, Zoltán Paksy and Attila Márfi for helping me with my research on Béla Kerekes, a candidate of the Arrow Cross Party, and for drawing my attention to a number of circumstances unknown to me – L.T. Vizi.

50 Hubai 2001b, p. 117. p. 120; Paksy 2009, pp. 214–216; Laczkóné Dr Tuka 2003, p. 88.

51 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (24 June 1939): A petition was submitted against the mandate of Béla Kerekes, an Arrow Cross candidate from Székesfehérvár. XLI (141). p. 2.

52 Parliamentary Almanac. On the 1939–1944 National Assembly. Haeffler, I. (ed.), Magyar Távirati Iroda Rt., Budapest, 1940, pp. 242–243.

53 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (21 May 1939): The candidates had to submit the recommendation forms by noon today. XLI (114). p. 1.

government voters in Székesfehérvár therefore still had to be mobilised and convinced to participate in the elections and vote for the list of the Party of Hungarian Life on Pentecost Sunday. However, the week before the elections was an election silence period, a "silent week", as it was then called, so this could no longer be achieved by organising political rallies. The only possible solution was the press. Therefore, an announcement was published in the Székesfehérvár Friss Ujság on 21 May, which informed the pro-government voters in detail about the election process, expressly drawing their attention to the voting behaviour necessary and essential for success:

> "Although no opposition candidate is running against Dr Bálint Hóman, voters must appear before the ballot box, because it is very important that those who want to vote for the list of the Party of Hungarian Life cast their votes. The registered ballot paper will contain two lists namely the list of the Party of Hungarian Life and then the list of the Arrow Cross Party. Both lists will be preceded by an empty box and voters must place a cross in the box of the party list they wish to vote for. We also draw voters' attention to the fact that signing a recommendation form does not impose any obligation on the voter. Thus, regardless of the form they signed, they can vote for either party. Voters should not be misled in any way. We would also like to remind you that names other than those on the ballot paper should not be entered, as only candidates on the list have the right to stand in the election and any such alteration would spoil the ballot paper."[54]

Providing such highly detailed information was not only aimed at mobilising the urban voters of the Party of Hungarian Life (although this certainly was the main objective), it was also necessary due to the fact that the electorate had to face a comparatively new process in the 1939 elections of voting by secret ballot.

The real surprise, however, came on 22 May, when the electoral commissioners reviewing the recommendation forms "did not approve the list

54 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (21 May 1939): Information on the election of Members of Parliament. XLI (114). p. 2.

of the Arrow Cross because the submitters of the forms did not appear among the signatories to the recommendation forms [...]"[55] This, however, was set forth as a binding requirement in paragraph (2), Section 84 of the Electoral Law in force. It was made compulsory by said law that "the recommendation form must be handed over in person by two supporters who are personally known to the electoral commissioners or who present proof of their identity before them."[56] The Arrow Cross Party made a mistake when their list was submitted to the Electoral Commission by two persons, Ferenc Ács and István Dominó, who were not included in the recommendation form as supporters. Registration of the Arrow Cross list was therefore correctly rejected by the Electoral Commission headed by Dr Béla Hlavathy.[57] Thus, the intricate maze of the electoral law in Fejér County proved to be suitable for preventing the Arrow Cross Party from gaining a parliamentary mandate.

All of this resulted in an entirely novel situation with regard to the party list voting in Fejér County. Namely that a party other than the Party of Hungarian Life could not legally compile an electoral list, as a result of which the list of the Party of Hungarian Life was the winner of the elections in Fejér County without voting and without an opposition candidate. Given this situation, the county voters did not have to vote for any party list. On Pentecost Sunday, the elections were held only in the single-member constituencies of Adony, Mór, Sárbogárd and Székesfehérvár.

The rejection of the Arrow Cross list led to a new situation for the citizens of Székesfehérvár. This meant that they did not have to cast any votes during the elections: neither for an individual candidate nor for a party list. The voters of Székesfehérvár received official information about this on 27 May, the day before the vote. They were also informed that the competent Electoral Commissions would hold a short meeting at 8 a.m. on the morning of the vote

55 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (23 May 1939): The list of the Arrow Cross Party was rejected in Fejér County by the Chairman of the Electoral Commission. XLI (115). p. 1.

56 Act XIX of 1938 on the Election of Members of Parliament: Paragraph (2), Section 84.

57 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (24 May 1939): Why did the electoral commissioner reject the list of the Arrow Cross Party in Fejér County. XLI. (116). p. 1; SZFU (24 May 1939): The list of the Arrow Cross Party. XLI (116). p. 3.

to establish the unanimous outcome of the election and to issue the mandates to the elected representatives. According to the statement: "On 4 June, Ödön Csiky, chairman of the Electoral Commission, will perform the ceremony for the representative of the city, Dr Bálint Hóman, Minister of Culture, who will be on the balcony at the town hall and at the same time, will give a longer speech."[58]

The governing party won the National Assembly elections in Fejér County held on 28 May 1939. In addition to the list of the Party of Hungarian Life, Bálint Hóman and László Magasházy gained mandates unanimously, i.e. without opposition candidates, in the constituencies of Székesfehérvár and Vál, while on the day of the vote, in all of the pending single-member constituencies the candidates of the ruling party, Ferenc Simon (Adony district), Antal Czermann (Mór district), Béla Jurcsek (Sárbogárd district) and István Sigray (Székesfehérvár district) received the majority of votes.[59] However, the result of around 40% for the Arrow Cross candidates in the county served as a red flag for the future. Their results were even better in the constituency of Mór, where they won 49% of the vote and the ruling party was only able to narrowly win the election.

Results of the national socialist-hungarist parties in the Pentecost elections

To conclude our study, we examine the results of the national socialist-hungarist parties in the 1939 Pentecost elections and compare them with those of 1935. First of all, it should be noted that in the 1935 elections only two far-right parties stood for election: the Hungarian National Socialist Party led by

58 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (27 May 1939): The Electoral Commission will meet in Székesfehérvár on Sunday morning at 8 a.m. XLI (119). p. 2.

59 [Without signature and initials], SZFU (31 May 1939): Election results today at 1 p.m. XLI (121). p. 1; Hubai 2001b, pp. 127, 129, 132.

Sándor Festetics and the Party of National Will led by Lajos Csoór. The former won two seats, while Lajos Csoór also won a mandate. In the 1939 elections, by contrast, no less than ten far-right parties competed with each other for the seats.[60] Six parties managed to compile electoral rolls: the United Hungarian National Socialist Party, the Christian National Socialist Front, the Hungarian National Socialist Agricultural Labourers' and Workers' Party, and the National Front were able to do so in one county, the Arrow Cross Party in eight counties and the Independent far-right in two counties. There were only two parties – the National Front and the Arrow Cross Party – that were able to announce party lists; the former in five cities, the latter in six cities.[61]

In the elections, 382,588 people voted for the far-right county lists and 166,149 for the city lists. The results of the Arrow Cross Party list were of paramount importance. They took nearly 199,000 votes for their party lists in the counties and 139,000 for their party lists in the cities, winning a total of 338,000 votes.[62]

The ten far-right parties that were able to nominate candidates in the single-member constituencies received a total of 378,566 votes. The Arrow Cross Party obtained the majority of the votes cast, namely 192,000.[63] 15.41% of the voters voted for the Arrow Cross lists, and 12.88% for the individual candidates. Overall, this accounted for more than 14% of the vote. The other national socialist parties obtained 7.7% of the vote,[64] which meant that far-right parties could prepare for the parliamentary term holding 22% of the vote.

The question was: What was this enough for and how many seats did the approximately 900,000 votes cast for far-right parties and candidates result in? In the counties, 19 far-right representatives were elected to the National

60 The ten parties were as follows: United Hungarian National Socialist Party, Christian National Socialist Front, Hungarian National Socialist Agricultural Labourers' and Workers' Party, Hungarian National Socialist Party, National Front, Arrow Cross Party, Independent far-right, Hungarian Racial Defence Party, Independent racial defenders, Party of National Will. Hubai 2001a, pp. 62–63, 67.

61 Hubai 2001a, p. 65.

62 Hubai 2001a, p. 66.

63 Hubai 2001a, p. 67.

64 Hubai 2001a, pp. 66–67.

Assembly from the party lists, 9 of whom were candidates of the Arrow Cross Party. It was only the Arrow Cross candidates, a total of 13, that won seats via the party lists in towns. The total number of seats via the far-right party list was 32, of which 22 were taken by the Arrow Cross Party.[65]

Far-right parties managed to win 17 seats in single-member constituencies. These 17 seats were shared by 8 parties. Again, it was the Arrow Cross Party that won most of the seats, taking 7.[66]

Overall, the far-right won 49 seats in the 1939 Pentecost elections, of which the Arrow Cross Party alone won 22 seats from the party list, and 7 seats from individual electoral districts, thus securing a total of 29 seats in the National Assembly.[67] This provided the Arrow Cross Party with 11.2% of the parliamentary seats and the other far-right parties with 7.7%, representing a total of 18.9% of all mandates in the legislature.

It is not the purpose of this study to provide a further in-depth analysis of the results of 1939 elections. It should be noted, however, that if checks had not been incorporated into the electoral law that led to the success of the ruling party, the votes cast for the far-right parties could have resulted in a much larger number of seats in the National Assembly. These efficient checks included a significant curtailment of the census suffrage, the introduction of an electoral deposit, strict rules on recommendations, a special procedure for distributing seats, the submission of a petition against the results, the annulment of far-right mandates by the Administrative Court, and a number of intricate mazes in the electoral law, which were well known to the members of the pro-government Electoral Commissions and, as we could see in the case of the Székesfehérvár election, were also applied effectively. However, it was also unfavourable for the far-right parties that they were unable to resist the urge to form new parties over and over again as in the early 1930s, to settle the almost constant interpersonal conflicts, and to remedy the shortcomings in party organisation, which ultimately made it impossible for far-right parties to

65 Hubai 2001a, p. 69.
66 Hubai 2001a, p. 68.
67 Hubai 2001a, p. 68.

join together. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that during the years between the 1935 and 1939 elections, the support for far-right parties and movements increased enormously. Their rise is indisputable. As well as the fact that the governing parties used all constitutional and administrative means[68] in order to hinder this rise. Although this was successful in the 1939 Pentecost elections, those who closely followed the domestic policy developments and perceived their shift to the right amid the rising popularity of far-right ideology in Europe, could rightly feel that storm clouds were gathering in the spring of 1939.

68 As an example, on 13 April 1939, at the beginning of the election campaign, the government banned the only newspaper of the Arrow Cross for three months, thereby completely undermining the Arrow Cross election campaign.

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The Hungarian World 1938–1940

Eighty years ago, in 1938-1940, Hungary was changing. The peaceful territorial revisions seemed to break the shackles of Trianon, while at the same time the immediate neighbourhood and growing European influence of the Third Reich and later the outbreak of the Second World War increasingly threatened Hungary's independence.

Thanks to the peaceful territorial revisions, in these three years major territories returned to the motherland on three occasions, whose population was predominantly Hungarian, but hundreds of thousands of people of other nationalities also became citizens of Hungary, whom the state welcomed with extensive linguistic, administrative and educational rights. This was the golden age of cafés and Hungarian films, when, during the commemorative year of St. Stephen and the World Eucharistic Congress, Hungarians proved that they were holding on to their Christian roots. At the same time, the first two Jewish laws were passed, and anti-Semitism was on the rise, while the problems of the rural society had yet to be solved.

The Hungarian society felt less of the dangers of the World War for the time being; most of the people believed that the devastation of the Great War was so vivid in the collective memory that another global conflagration could be avoided.

The studies in the volume take an informed approach to topics that are controversial, neglected or still relevant today. The authors – strictly applying the methodology of historiography – formulate their opinions on the basis of sources and a wide range of literature, without hiding behind the disguise of objectivity and value neutrality, as a result of which a scientifically sound, detailed and nuanced picture of the Horthy era emerges on the pages of the volume, both in terms of the topics and the value judgements.

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